

CHAPTER 27



RECEIVED TEXT

ERASMUS

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-

RARE Bible collectors are offering for sale, *Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament* [English translation], bound with an edition of the Great Bible. It is the only copy on the market today in the world. The price for this second edition is \$26,000.⁰⁰. God gave me the *first* edition (1548-49), which is now nestled away in a bank vault, following my eye straining analysis of it. Needless to say, I can now tell modern Christians exactly what Erasmus (1466?-1536) believed about most Bible subjects. (My rare two-volume set of *Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament*, accompanied by the Great Bible's New Testament, 1548-49 edition, is being made available on CD-ROM by A.V. Publications.)

Who is this man, whose writings still generate such interest? He taught Tyndale, influenced Luther, and printed a Greek New Testament that was consulted by the KJV translators. His many admirers, who circle the globe, will pay huge sums for his writings; his detractors, who circumvent the truth, lay wait to tumble his righteous Greek New Testament. J.A. Froude, one of Erasmus' biographers and a Professor of History at Oxford writes,

“[T]here had gathered about his name the hate which mean men feel for an enemy who has proven too strong for them...The vengeance which the monks could not inflict upon him in life, they proposed to wreak upon his bones” (Froude, J.A., *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, London: Longmans, 1901, vol. 1, p. 113).

Examining each sparkling facet of his spiritual writings will shed light upon the kind of man God would use to print the *pure* Greek New Testament, which the KJV parallels. He stands in sharp contrast to doctrinally tainted men, such as B.F. Westcott and Catholic Cardinal Carlo Martini, who edited Greek New Testaments, which underlie new versions such as the TNIV, NIV, NASB, ESV, and HCSB. Through Erasmus' eyes we will look at Bibles whose roots stem from the Apostles and whose branches spread around the globe, bearing the fruit of Reformation Bibles, such as the German Luther, French Olivetan, Italian Diodati, Spanish Valera, and the King James Bible.

THE LIFE OF ERASMUS

“*And* that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures...” 2 Tim. 3:15.

◆ Erasmus was the son of a man, who at some later point, became a priest and “went to Rome, supporting himself there by **copying manuscripts...**” (Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom*, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969, p. 8).

◆ His parents sent him, for six years, to Gerard Groote’s school of the Brethren of the Common Life, a group which made their living by “**the copying of manuscripts.**” Because of their location in Holland, this group escaped many of the heresies of the Catholic church. (The Roman Empire never went past the Rhine River.) “The piety was marked by a heartfelt, lyrical devotion to Jesus...” (Bainton, pp. 9, 10; see also John Joseph Mangan, *Life, Character and Influence of Erasmus*, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 9).

When the parents of Erasmus died, “Erasmus was eager to go to a university, but the guardians...prevailed on them [Erasmus and his brother] to enter monasteries...” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1910, vol. 9, p. 728).

“The little Erasmus was the heir of a moderate fortune; and his guardians desiring to appropriate it to themselves, endeavored to force him into a convent at Brabant...[A]n orphan boy’s resistance was easily overcome. He was bullied into yielding, and, when about twenty, took the vows” (Froude, *Short Studies*, p. 76).

According to one historian, Erasmus described his education as “one long conspiracy to force him into the monastic life” (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. 4, p. 164). Erasmus stated, “You know that I was forced into it by interested guardians...[M]y profession was a mistake...Boys and girls, however, who have been tempted into religious houses ought to be set free, as having been taken in by fraud” (Froude, *The Life and Letters of Erasmus: Lectures Delivered at Oxford 1893-4*, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899, pp. 170, 340).

“The kidnapping of boys and girls who had either money, or rank, or talent, was a common method of recruiting among the religious orders in the 15th century...Their business was to catch in some way superior lads, threaten them, frighten them, beat them, crush their spirits, tame them, as the process was called, and break them in for the cloister...Erasmus says [they] kissed him, caressed him,...[and] employed incantations and exorcisms when they found boys hesitating and frightened” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 5-8).

Erasmus described in detail what happened, in a letter to a friend:

“YOUNG men are fooled or cheated into joining these orders. Once in the toils, they are broken in and trained into Pharisees. They may repent, but the superiors will not let them go, lest they should betray the orgies which they have witnessed. They crush them down with scourge and penance, the secular arm, chanceries and dungeons” (cont.)

“Nor is this the worst. Cardinal Matteo said at a public dinner before a large audience, naming person and place, that the Dominicans had buried a young man alive whose father demanded his son’s release. A Polish noble who had fallen asleep in a church saw two Franciscans buried alive; yet these wretches call themselves the representatives of Benedict and Basil and Jerome. A monk may be drunk every day. He may go with loose women secretly or openly. He may waste the churches money on vicious pleasures. He may be a quack or a charlatan, and all the while be an excellent brother and fit to be an abbot; while one who for the best reasons lays aside his frock [which Erasmus did] is howled at as an apostate. Surely the true apostate is he who goes into sensuality, pomp, vanity, the lusts of the flesh...”

“Is it not wicked, my dear friend, to entangle young men by false representations in such an abominable net? Monks whose lives are openly infamous draw boys after them into destruction. The convent at best is but a miserable bondage, and if there be some outward decency (as among so many there must be some undepraved), a knot which cannot be loosed may still prove so fatal to soul and body.”

“There must be no influencing, or violence or terror. It ought not to bind when a frightened lad has had the halter forced upon him...”

Erasmus states that they “made him wear the dress, but they never had his consent. His oath was but an oath sworn to so many pirates” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 175, 176, see also 173-179). Erasmus’ notes for Matt. 19:12 in his Greek New

Testament, comment on those, such as himself, “who by fraud or intimidation have been thrust into that life...” Scrivener reports that Erasmus was “forced” to become a priest (Scrivener, Frederick, *A Plain Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, London: Bell, 1894, vol. 2, p. 182). “Erasmus after prolonged reluctance became an Augustinian...There he found little religion...his ardent spirit could not be content with monastic life” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1910, vol. 9, p. 728).

He was persuaded to join the monastery “solely for its library, which was the finest of the century” and “by the promise of access to many books...” (Mangan, p. 41; Durant, Will, *The Story of Civilization: The Reformation*, vol. 6, New York: MJF Books, 1957, pp. 271, 272). He took advantage of their free education and “consumed the libraries.” Corrupt scripture readings, no doubt, caught his eye, as he, along with others, “studied in the ‘carrels’ or wrote and illuminated in the Scriptorium” (Mangan, p. 180 et al.). Historians say he resisted taking their vows, but was forced to do it.

“The words were forced into his mouth and choked him as he spoke his assent. The halter was about his neck. He was like a handcuffed prisoner in the clutches of the police. The vow was twisted out of him as if he was on the rack, and the fatal declaration was uttered. This is Erasmus’ own account of his profession, exactly as he related it to the Pope” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 16, 17).

Erasmus’ tract, called *On Contempt of the World*, written while at the monastery, showed his contempt for it. “[T]here are priests among us who have never given any serious thought to what Christianity is all about,” he said (Bainton, p. 261). He observed the monks and concluded:

“A monk’s holy obedience...consists in—what? In leading an honest, chaste and sober life? Not the least...A monk may be a glutton, a drunkard, a whoremonger, an ignorant, stupid, malignant, envious brute,

but he has broken no vow...He has only to be the slave of a superior as good for nothing as himself..." (Froude, *Short Studies*, vol. I, p. 77).

In Nisard's *Études sur la Renaissance*, is portrayed the monk, "Erasmus depicts for us, whose corruption and filth used to cause him nausea...hiding within the walls of their convents debauchery that would have terrified the city...where prostitution is introduced by the back door" (p. 4, cited in Mangan, p. 184).

FREEDOM FOR ERASMUS: TO PARIS

“ MUST and I will be free,” Erasmus

wrote, (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 57, 21).

For the remainder of his life he did not wear “the habit of the Augustinians,” nor live in a “monastery.” “He may have been twenty when he left the convent.” “In all of his bulky correspondence he never once mentioned having said the mass” (Froude, p. 21; Bainton, pp. 103, 244 et al.). “[T]here is no record that he ever exercised the priestly functions, and monasticism was one of the chief objects of his attack in his lifelong assault upon the evils of the Church” (*The New Schaff-Herzog*, vol. IV, p. 164).

Erasmus sought a position, near Brussels, working for a bishop, who had a great library. Here Erasmus found many manuscripts. Once he had thoroughly combed this library, he secured release from this position to go to the University of Paris for a doctorate in theology. Erasmus said,

“I must acquire the **absurd** title of Doctor. It will not make me a hair the better...I have to fight with monsters, and I must wear the dress of Hercules” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 80; see also Mangan, p. 214).

“He was free for the first time in his life...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 21-22). At this time he was in his middle to late twenties. The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* states,

“FROM this time on Erasmus led the life of an **independent scholar**, independent of country, of academic ties, of religious allegiance, of everything that could interfere with the free development of his intellect and the freedom of his literary expression...holding himself aloof from all entangling obligations...” (vol. IV, p. 164).

During his theological studies at the University of Paris, “Unruly students were flogged till the blood came.” Both John Calvin and Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, were trained there, under the same merciless professor, Mr. Standock. Erasmus despised it; Calvin and Loyola did *not* see so clearly and integrated this sadistic Catholic thinking into their own theology. (This is part of the reason Erasmus could not join Calvin, who was not opposed to burning people at the stake.) “Upon his teachers in this discipline Erasmus emptied the vials of scorn,” said Bainton. Erasmus finally left the University of Paris, concluding, “Heresy does not arise among the laity who have the scriptures in the vernacular, but among the doctors” (Bainton, p. 35, 36, 203). He spoke of both Catholic and other theologians,

“[W]hose brains are the rottenest, intellects the dullest, doctrines the thorniest, manners the brutalest, life the foulest, speech the spitefulest, hearts the blackest that I have ever encountered in the world...theologians. They are a proud, susceptible race...They live in the third heaven, adoring their own persons and disdaining the poor crawlers upon earth. They are surrounded by a **bodyguard of definitions...**” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 70, 130). (These ‘definitions’ have been embalmed in Greek lexicons and haunt the pages of today’s new versions. They may even materialize in KJV churches, with the magic incantation, ‘That word *a-c-t-u-a-l-l-y* means...’)

Young Erasmus moved on to Italy to “visit libraries,” attracted by the immense collections the Catholic church had amassed, through its centuries of pilferage (*Erasmii Epistola*, vol. II, 808, p. 267). “[T]he fashionable occupation of Popes, Cardinals, and princes became the amassing of manuscripts and the collecting of vast libraries.” Guarino of Verona (1371-1460) had traveled to Constantinople, “expressly for the purpose of buying Greek manuscripts.” The Pope’s secretary, Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) had “devoted himself to the fascinating task of searching the monastic libraries of Germany, France, and Switzerland, for copies” of lost manuscripts.

With the treasured manuscripts of many lands now housed in Italy, their universities were ‘overflowing with students from every part of Europe, her libraries rich with manuscripts...’ Pope Nicholas V (d. 1455) had collected “a library that excelled in every way anything that the learned world had yet attempted.” He sent “scholars to scour Europe and Asia Minor for copies of the Greek and Latin classics...” In eight short years he added “five thousand” manuscripts, many Greek ones, to the collection (Mangan, pp. 87, 88 et al.).

While Erasmus was in Italy he spent all of his time “devouring the libraries,” states Durant. “[C]omparing two codices...for the more correct reading of some intricate passage” was his passion (Durant, p. 275; Mangan, pp. 275, 91). Erasmus states,

“It may easily be guessed how large a part of the usefulness of my work would have been lacking if my learned friends had not **supplied me with manuscripts**” (Mangan, p. 241).

THE Vatican librarians, Beroaldo and Inghirami, both befriended Erasmus. Cardinal Grimani, “offered him the use of his house,” with “his library consisting of the best books written in all sorts of languages.” “The Grimani library was, after that of the Pope, the most considerable that was in Rome at that time and consisted of eight thousand volumes.” The Cardinal himself “had translated into Italian St. Chrysostom’s *Treatise on the Incomprehensible Nature of God*.” Erasmus befriended Angleo Colocci, who had “a library of the rarest books and manuscripts, all of which he generously threw open for the delectation of his literary friends.” Egidius Antonini, who “had a profound knowledge of Greek” and was soon to become Patriarch of Constantinople in 1524, befriended Erasmus (Mangan, pp. 284, 273-274, 271).

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee:...” (Ps. 76:10).

Covetous Rome did the legwork for Erasmus, collecting Bible manuscripts the world over. Rome built beautiful and comfortable libraries for them. When all was complete, Erasmus came and spent years studying the manuscripts. When he was finished, the libraries were destroyed. “[F]ine libraries, which had been thrown freely open to him,” were later destroyed when the French besieged Rome in 1527. Colocci lost his “library and all its treasures.” “In the sack of Rome, he [Antonini] lost his priceless library,” which no doubt afforded Erasmus many treasured manuscripts. Another friend Erasmus made during his trip to Italy was Jacopo Sadoleti, who had “priceless treasures” in his “valuable library.” When the attack on Rome began, Sadoleti loaded all of his “treasured tomes” on a ship; it was refused landing at any post because of the plague, “so the library perished.” Through Erasmus, God carried his word forward and the ancient manuscripts could be destroyed. Their survival would only lead to “endless genealogies” of texts. “For we walk by faith, not by sight:” (Mangan, pp. 275, 274, 272, 287; 2 Cor. 5:7).

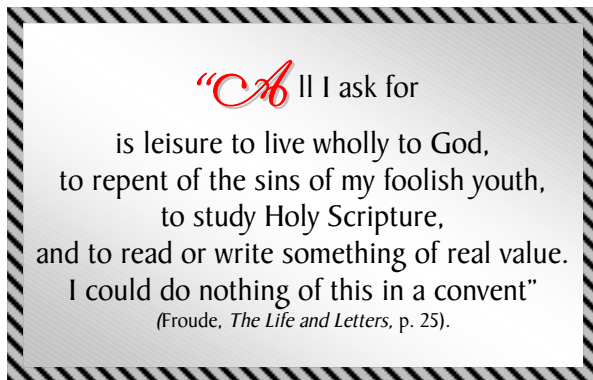
While in Italy, Erasmus was befriended by Paolo Bombace, Professor of Greek at the University of Bologna. He shared Erasmus “anti-papal leaning” (Mangan, p. 228). Upon seeing Italy for the first time Erasmus said,

“How much sense is there in squandering so much money in order that a few lone monks may chant in a marble church...” (Bainton, p. 80).

He viewed the pope in a garish procession “with a mighty groan,” asking, ‘was Pope Julius the successor of Jesus Christ or Julius Caesar?’ (See upcoming section, “Erasmus Writes About Popes”) (Bainton, p. 81).

“[I]n the papal circle he sensed a paganism...Cruelty in Rome shocked Erasmus...The superstitions of the people revolted him” (Bainton, pp. 87, 88, 89).

“[I]t is certain that Erasmus places himself at the viewpoint of a gospel ideal which was not in the mind of any [Catholic] Italian of that time” (Mangan p. 277). He stayed in Italy only long enough to scour their libraries for manuscripts; he spent the rest of his life in England and Protestant Northern Europe, where he had been reared. Erasmus wrote to a friend,



“*A*ll I ask for
is leisure to live wholly to God,
to repent of the sins of my foolish youth,
to study Holy Scripture,
and to read or write something of real value.
I could do nothing of this in a convent”
(Froude, The Life and Letters, p. 25).

ERASMUS & THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Once Erasmus arrived back in the somewhat safe harbor of his own area of Protestant Europe, he could now publish and print *the scriptures* — the text he had seen as a child in handwritten form, handled in the great libraries and homes of Europe and England, heard preached from the pulpits of humble churches, and shared by devout Christians who had hidden them in their heart. *Handwritten* Greek New Testaments abounded throughout Europe, and particularly in Greece. But the **printing** press was a rather new invention and Erasmus was the *first* to marry this new iron soldier with the text of the ancient *handwritten* Greek New Testament. (The Catholic church had *printed* their Complutensian Polyglot Bible, with a Greek New Testament, but being true to form, they did not *publish and disseminate* it until many years later.) In Erasmus' Greek New Testament were lovingly woven many threads of the past. He drew his text from a lifelong friendship with manuscripts of the Bible.

This intimacy with Bible manuscripts carried with it the knowledge of just what THE Bible said in the multitude of vernacular editions which covered Europe. He did not create the text; he was merely the hub from which the printing press's wheels spun this standard text out to scores and scores of people who had never before seen a *printed* Greek New Testament. Erasmus was, like the good “wise men, and scribes,” Jesus spoke of in Matt. 23:34. He was much like the “men” who “copied out” the scriptures in the Old Testament. (The technical name would be an *'analecta,'* one who collects the works of another, rather than ‘creating’ it.) He had a love for the Lord, an in-depth knowledge of Greek and a profound knowledge of the scriptures and their accurate readings. The readings of Erasmus' Greek New Testament were so profoundly correct, because from birth to death, his life was immersed in the Bible and in manuscripts.

By 1500, Erasmus (age 34),

“...had formed his resolve to study and edit [from errors] the Greek text of the New Testament as the distilled essence of that real Christianity which, in the judgment of reformers and humanists alike, had been overlaid and concealed by the dogmas and accretions of centuries” (Durant, p. 273).

Rummaging through the library of the Premonstratation abbey at Pare near Louvain, at the age of 35, Erasmus had seen the manuscript of Lorenzo Valla's annotations from at least *three Greek New Testament manuscripts* (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. III, p. 80). Valla had noted “serious errors in the Vulgate” (Durant, p. 272). Erasmus then,

“...devoted much of his career to the task of developing, refining, and extending Valla's methods” (Bentley, Jerry H., *Humanists and Holy Writ*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983, chapter 2).

Erasmus continued combing Europe and England for manuscripts, “examining libraries,” throughout his entire life. “He spent his time in the great libraries, devouring all the books he could find.” He moved constantly, after he had exhausted the libraries and bookshelves of a city. He wrote that he had acquired so *many* manuscripts that he needed two assistants to help carry them and plenty of time to “arrange them” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 55, 57-58, 54).

Erasmus wrote to a friend *very* early in his career,

“I am comparing Greek MSS. I am determined to...devote myself to undiscovered [copies of the] epistles, which I burn to handle” (See the Leyden edition of *Ep.* vol. lxxxiii, 1702 or Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 63, note 2; “*arcanis literis*” is ‘undiscovered epistles’).

Erasmus had gone to Venice, Italy, because it had the world's only native Greek-speaking teacher. He gave his reasons for going to Italy in a poem which says in part,

“Sucked every **book** like a bee
To know the **Greek** and Latin
Encompassed land and sea!...
Casting everything other aside
Your honor, your glory, your study
Is this, that **Christ be your guide...**”
(Bainton, p. 79).

**“The Greek scholars were
prodigiously obligating to Erasmus
and
inundated him with manuscripts”**
(Bainton, p. 83)

While there, he wrote a book on the proper pronunciation of *ancient* Greek. Because of this:
As early as 1505, he wrote to a friend,

“I shall sit down to Holy Scripture with my whole heart, and devote the rest of my life to it...[A]ll these three years I have been working entirely at Greek, and have not been playing with it” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 87).

At the age of 40, he became the world's leading authority on the Greek language and the Greek New Testament. As such, he was hired to teach Greek at Cambridge University. He had already declined invitations to many professorships in Europe (Durant, p. 275 et al.). Eight years before the printing of the Greek New Testament, its composition was central in his thinking.

“The letter of 28 October 1507 to Aldus Manutius shows what an important place ...the Greek New Testament had now taken in his plans” (*The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, vol. 2, edited by G.W.H. Lampe, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 496).

He began working directly on the text much before 1507. Froude wrote that years before the text appeared, it was being prepared.

“He was known to be preparing an edition of the [Greek] New Testament with a fresh translation [Latin]. He had been at work over the Greek MSS. for **many years**. The work was approaching completion” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 93).

“...the edition was in great part prepared during a stay in England” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 498).

Erasmus said, “ I am losing my eyesight from overwork...I toil over Greek texts...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 76).

The Yale University Press states, “That it is often reported that printer Johann Froben asked Erasmus to work quickly...” To this **lie** Yale responds, “Erasmus himself wrote that he had been working on his edition for two years,” between 1512 and 1514 (Allen, P.S., *Erasmii Epistolae* III, Oxford, 1906-58, vol. III, no. 256, lines 152-58). Yale adds that “Erasmus claimed in the preface to have consulted the oldest and best manuscripts...” (Hotchkiss, Valerie and Price, David, *The Reformation of the Bible & The Bible of the Reformation*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 100).

When he went to Basel to work on the printing of this Greek New Testament, he arrived “weighed down with books...and copious notes on the New Testament” (Rummel, Erika, *Erasmus's Annotations on the New Testament*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986, p. 23).

We have seen that Erasmus was surrounded with Bible manuscripts from his childhood in the 1460s, until the publication of his Greek Text in 1516. This is over 40 years! He worked for a dozen years on the text itself.



Froude agrees, writing,

“Through all these struggling **years** he had been patiently labouring at his New Testament...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 119).

Yet KJV *critics* love to *pretend* that Erasmus hurriedly put his Greek New Testament together.

XOne pamphleteer, tells his hapless readers, “The work on the Greek text was hastily and carelessly done...in great haste” (Kutilek, Douglas, *Erasmus: His Greek Text and His Theology*, Hatfield, PA: IBRI, 1995, pp. 4, 6; the footnote Kutilek offers to document this claim does not exist when checked!).

Erasmus states, “The only way to determine the true text is to examine the **early** codices...My work has been to restore a buried literature, and recall divines from their hairsplitting to a knowledge of the New Testament” (Bainton, p. 135; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 279). In Erasmus’ dedication to his Greek New Testament he writes,

“I perceive that teaching, which is our salvation, was to be had in a much purer and more lively form if sought at the fountainhead and drawn from the **actual sources** than from pools and runnels [corrupt Catholic texts and teachings].

And so I have revised the whole new Testament against the standard of **the Greek originals...**" (*The Collected Works of Erasmus*, 3:222-223, Epistle 384).

Erasmus *said* his text was "solidly based" (de Jonge, Henk J., "Novum Testamentum a Nobis Versum: The Essence of Erasmus' Edition of the New Testament," *Journal of Theological Studies* 35, October 1984, p. 400). "Erasmus suggested that he had consulted **many** manuscripts" (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. III, p. 60).

IT IS an exaggeration to maintain, as some do, that Erasmus only used the Greek manuscripts that he had found in the library of the Basle Dominicans for his edition."

He himself protested against accusations of this sort, in his dedicatory letter to Leo X. And it seems undeniable that he used notes, at any rate, which he had made on the manuscripts that he had seen in England..."
(*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. II, p. 498).

In fact, Erasmus' own manuscript collection was so large and valuable, it was covetously seized by customs when he left England to go to the Continent to finalize the Greek New Testament in 1514. He protested saying that "they had stolen the labours of his **life**." The manuscripts were returned in a few days (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 169).

Yet false assertions, repeated over and over *ad nauseam*, state that Erasmus had only a few Greek manuscripts.

X William Combs of Detroit Theological Seminary writes in *error*, "Seven manuscripts were used by Erasmus in Basel to compile the Greek text...All of these were the property of the

Dominican Library in Basel with the exception of 2^{ap} which was obtained from...Basel...It is based on a few very late manuscripts, and in some cases has no Greek manuscript support whatever.” (Actually, less than seven manuscripts from Rome support the errors in the HCSB, ESV, NASB, and the TNIV!) (William Combs, *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, “Erasmus and the Textus Receptus,” Spring 1996 pp. 45, 53).

✘ Another Erasmus critic echoes, “Erasmus traveled to Basel and used what few Greek manuscripts were there as the basis of his text.” This critic pretends further, that Erasmus’ Greek Text is based on “the slimmest of manuscript resources” and the “feeblest of manuscript resources” (Kutilek, pp. 2, 5).

On the contrary, *The Cambridge History of the Bible* affirms, regarding the Greek New Testament of Erasmus:

“IT CORRESPONDS to the manuscript tradition which in fact prevailed in the Greek Church; and not until the end of the nineteenth century were editions proposed that differed [Westcott & Hort] other than on points of detail” (vol. 2, p. 499).

Kenneth W. Clark, the scholar who has examined more Greek manuscripts than most, admits,

“WE SHOULD NOT attribute to Erasmus the creation of a ‘received text,’ but only the transmission from a manuscript text, already commonly received, to a printed form, in which this text would continue to prevail for three centuries”

(*The Gentile Bias and Other Essays*, The Erasmian Notes on Codex 2, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980, p. 168.)

Today there are over 5200 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. KJV critics ignore the fact that over 99 % agree with Erasmus' Greek New Testament and the KJV. Less than one percent (.008) agree with the odd omissions and changes in the TNIV, NIV, ESV, HCSB, NASB, NRSV, NLB, CEV, NCV, NAB, and NJB. The agreement of this tiny minority is far from unanimous on many changes.

Yet other critics, such as James White, feel that, "Erasmus guessed" or "Erasmus' hunch" led him to the readings which match almost every Greek manuscript known today (White, James, *The King James Only Controversy*, Minneapolis, Minn: Bethany House Publisher, 1995, pp. 58, 59).

Were Erasmus alive today, he would find that, in the main, he had managed to match almost all of the over 5200 Greek manuscripts, and wisely ignore the other 44 corrupt ones. (If these critics had taken a course in Statistics in graduate school, they would know that guesses like this are statistically impossible, given the fact that the Greek New Testament has about 140,521 words.) Without the preservation of the text by God, try guessing all of them for yourself.

X Critics of the KJV, like William Combs, ignore the over 5200 Greek New Testament manuscripts which match the KJV, and pretend,

"The origins of the TR [*Textus Receptus*] go back to the Roman Catholic priest and Christian humanist Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, who lived from 1466 [?] to 1536" (Combs, p. 36; emphasis added).

With this statement, Combs is trying to give unwary readers the false impression that:

✘ The text that Erasmus used is not representative of the majority of Greek New Testament texts (over 5200) extant today, which it is.

✘ The Greek text of Erasmus began in the 1400s, which it did not.

✘ Erasmus was a Catholic in theology, which he was not.

✘ Doug Kutilek, likewise pretends,

“Erasmus is the father of the received Greek text”
(p. 15).

✘ James White feigns,

“Three men were primarily responsible for the creation of the Greek text utilized by the KJV translators in their work on the *New Testament*: Desiderius Erasmus, Robert Estienne better known as Stephanus, and Theodore Beza” (White, p. 62).

White, too, is trying to give his readers the false impression that these men ‘created’ this text, rather than merely PRINTING the Greek text that was received everywhere. Erasmus’ Greek New Testament text was a mirror of the handwritten Greek texts which were used before the advent of the printing press. Erasmus was merely the *first* to PRINT IT, PUBLISH IT AND CIRCULATE IT, in the new printed format.

Errors critics ascribe to Erasmus' first edition were chiefly not errors, but misprints. Erasmus "devoted the remainder of his life, among other labors, to the improvement of this edition" (Bainton, p. 133). By the time he was doing his fifth and last edition of the Greek New Testament in 1535,

"[H]e had a whole team of scholars working under his guidance..." (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 500, 498).

Erasmus' Greek New Testament text could not be faulted in its day, nor can it be impugned today. Erasmus writes,

"When you find a man raging against my New Testament, ask him if he has read it. If he says 'Yes,' ask him to what he objects. Not one of them can tell you..."

"They do not argue, because they cannot, and they trust entirely to evil speaking" (Froude. *The Life and Letters*, pp. 216-217, 233).

CRITICS often assert that 'Erasmus did not have the manuscripts we have today.' In fact, he had access to every reading currently extant, and rejected those matching the Catholic Vulgate (and the TNIV, NIV ESV, HCSB, and NASB today).

Erasmus even asked his acquaintance, Bombace, to check the *Vaticanus* in Rome. He was aware of its massive body of errors, but knew that, occasionally, it retained a few true readings from the Old *Itala*. (These types of readings are sometimes also evidenced in Jerome's writings, which Erasmus published, and in Jerome's Vulgate, which Erasmus believed sometimes evidenced an early Greek text which Jerome must have had access to (Bainton, p. 137; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 187).

“*He* [Erasmus] was told by a friend in 1521 of an ancient Vatican codex (the now famous B) from which the *Comma Joanneum* was missing (*Letters*, IV, 530)...[A] list of some 365 places was sent to him where B was in **agreement** with the Vulgate against the Greek manuscripts he had followed (*Letters*, X, 307).

“*To* THIS ERASMUS replied that one of the conditions of the union of Greek and Roman churches at Florence had been that the Greeks should conform their readings to those of the Latin Vulgate”

(*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3, pp. 203-204).

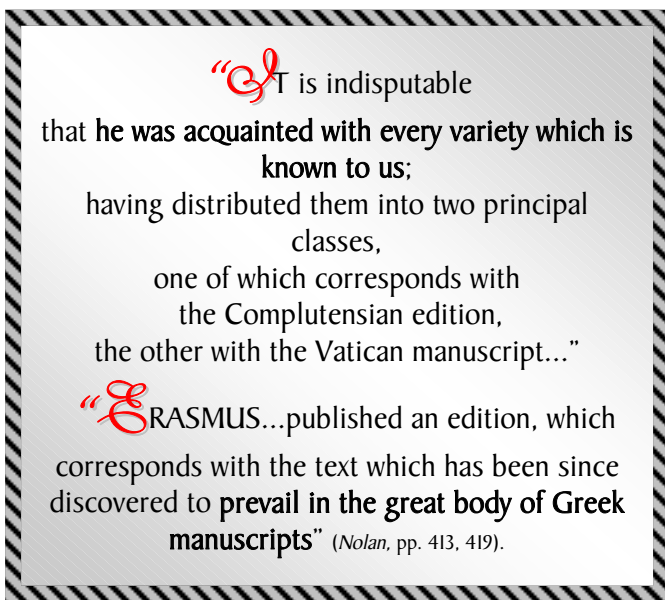
Note the importance of that last statement. Written by Erasmus, nearly 500 years ago, it reveals *why* the corrupt Latin manuscripts of the church of Rome often match the hand full (44) of corrupt Greek manuscripts (*Vaticanus*, *Sinaiticus*, P75 etc.) that underlie new versions. He said this was stated in the *Bulla aurea*, the written agreement between the politically minded Greek and Roman churches (*Letter*, X, p. 355).

Erasmus reveals clearly in the *Preface* (p. xviii) to his Greek New Testament, that he knew of the readings of the corrupt Greek text type. He attributed corruption to Origen! (p. xxi) (See Nolan, Frederick, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text*, London: Rivington, 1815, pp. 414-415 for Erasmus' Latin.)

Erasmus wrote,

“There were persons who were talking of mending religion, and even mending the Lord’s Prayer...**My chief fear is that with the revival of Greek literature there may be a revival of paganism** [the source of today’s Greek lexicon definitions]. There are Christians who are Christians only in name...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 186-187).

Frederick Nolan, writing in 1815, states,



“It is indisputable that **he was acquainted with every variety which is known to us;** having distributed them into two principal classes, one of which corresponds with the Complutensian edition, the other with the Vatican manuscript...”

“**ERASMUS**...published an edition, which corresponds with the text which has been since discovered to **prevail in the great body of Greek manuscripts**” (Nolan, pp. 413, 419).

In addition to the manuscripts which Erasmus owned or had seen himself, he gathered readings from the whole of Europe through his broad friendships. He noted, “I have a **room full** of letters from men of learning...”

“[W]e find by the dates of his letters that he was corresponding at length and elaborately with the learned men of his time on technical points of scholarship, Biblical criticism...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 377, 394).

ERASMUS' GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

& EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS

Erasmus further verified his Greek New Testament with scripture quotations seen in the writings of early Christian writers. His Greek text is so perfect, because he spent the first fifteen years of his studies almost wholly given to translating the early Christian writers of the first few centuries after Christ. In these writings from the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries, one finds evidence for *the Bible's oldest* readings. They usually predate, by several hundred years, the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* MSS, from which modern translations get their readings. Froben published Erasmus' work on the 'Fathers,' as a series which included, Cyprian, Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Basil, Ambrose and numerous others. Being a theologian, Erasmus knew the *origin* of heretical omissions. "[I]n many places the virus still lurked of...Marcion," he noted (Bainton, p. 264).

The prefaces (*Methodus, Apologia, and Paraclesis*) to Erasmus' Greek New Testament indicate that his methodology was vastly different from that which his enemies pretend. Yale's Professor Bainton states that Erasmus used,

“...translations...[and] quotations from the Scriptures in the work of the Church Fathers who wrote centuries **earlier than any manuscript** available to Erasmus” (Bainton, p. 136).

In Erasmus' *Ratio* he, “denounces wrong quotations of the Fathers,” still seen today in the *Glossa* [and Lexicons] — “truncated texts, wrenched from their contexts” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 492). “[T]runcated” texts, with only their trunk remaining, are used to support corrupt readings in today's versions.

The KJV states in Ephesians 3:9:

“God, who created all things **by Jesus Christ.**”

The TNIV, NIV, ESV, HCSB and NASB write,

“God, who created all things ☒ — — —.”

Noting another difference between Erasmus' Greek New Testament and the Catholic Vulgate text, a contemporary of Erasmus examined her extensive library and concluded he “...had made the addition on the basis of the text used by these Greek Fathers [Chrysostom, et al.]” (Bainton, p. 233). Erasmus' Greek text was based on such solid evidence that even the liberal *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1910 had to admit of his Greek text,

“[I]t revealed the fact that the Vulgate [whose readings can be seen today in the new versions]...was not only a secondhand document, but in places an erroneous document” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 9, p. 732).

CRITICS' ERRORS ABOUT I JOHN 5:7-8

Erasmus included I John 5:7 in his Greek New Testament of 1522.

X Doug Kutilek and James White re-write history thinking,

“Since Erasmus had promised, in his response to Lee, to include the passage [1 John 5:7-8], should a Greek manuscript be found that contained it, he [Erasmus] was constrained to insert the phrase in the third edition when presented with an Irish manuscript that contained the disputed phrase...” (White, p. 61; see also Kutilek, p. 4).

The world's leading Erasmusian scholar, Henk de Jonge, finds Bruce Metzger, James White, and others sorely wrong in their appraisal of Erasmus. He states, in his "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum," that White's assertions are patently wrong (*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56, 1980, pp. 381-89).

Even Bruce Metzger has finally admitted, in a buried note in the Appendix to his **third edition** of *The Text of the New Testament*, that White and Metzger's own books are wrong about this (p. 291, n. 2).

X Critic Daniel Wallace, like some in this age, appear to have given up praying at the nursing home and taken up 'preying on their home page.' This Dallas Theological Seminary teacher is still repeating this outdated error about Erasmus and 1 John 5:7 on the internet. Wallace pecks away to say,

"This implicit challenge-viz., that if he found such a reading in any Greek MS, he would put it in his text..."

When Theological Seminaries like Princeton (Metzger) and Dallas (Wallace) meet the word of God (as Dagon did in 1 Sam. 5:3), they too are "fallen" flat on their "face[s]." The "word of God" is "incurruptible"; it "liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).

Erasmus' books, and particularly his New Testament, were worldwide bestsellers.

"Never was [a] volume more passionately devoured. A hundred thousand copies were soon sold in France alone...His books were selling faster than ever, and the injury to the Church [of Rome]...was continually growing" (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 127, 354).

ERASMUS' SUCCESSORS:

TODAY'S TRADITIONAL GREEK TESTAMENTS

- **STEPHANUS (BERRY),**
- **BEZA, ELZEVIR**
- **SCRIVENER (TBS)**

ROBERT STEPHANUS (*Estienne* in French) produced a printed Greek New Testament after the death of Erasmus. He used the 16 Greek manuscripts in the library of King Francis I and his son Henry II. He said that they were all identical down to the letter! He used,

“...**identical** ancient quality codices in the possession” of the King’s Library (“*codices ipsa vetustatis specie pene adorandos,*” identical down to the “**letter**” (“*leteram*”) (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction*, vol. 2, p. 188).

The King paid for the printing of this text and protected Stephanus from the scorn of the Catholic church. The Stephanus Greek New Testament of 1550 was surprisingly identical to that of Erasmus, except in about nine inconsequential places. (Some of these were typographical errors.) Stephanus does not mention ever seeing or using Erasmus’ text! Stephanus was persecuted by the priests of the University of Paris for publishing Bibles “favoring Lutheranism”; he therefore moved to the land of Erasmus, a more Protestant environment. (See Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction*, p. 189 et al.; Armstrong, Elizabeth, *Robert Estienne, Royal Printer*, rev. ed., Abingdon, England: Sutton, p. 184 et al.).

THEODORE BEZA carried the printed Greek New Testament forward to the next generation. He began printing his own Greek New Testament in 1565. Beza joined Erasmus and the KJV translators in his appreciation of vernacular editions; he, too, was *not* ‘Greek-only.’ He used Stephanus’ text, along with a comprehensive collation of the Syriac and Aramaic Bibles. His resulting text differs

from Stephanus in only 38 insignificant places, some of which follow Erasmus (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction*, vol. 2, p. 193, Note 1).

The subsequent generation saw the printed Greek New Testament through the efforts of the **ELZEVIR** family. They followed the texts of Erasmus and Beza. When comparing the printed Stephanus Greek New Testament with the texts of the *next* editions of the Received Text, (Theodore Beza and the Elzevirs'), Scrivener says,

“[T]here is no **material** difference between any of them” (Scrivener, vol. 2, pp. 193, 195).

The 287 microscopic differences (spelling, word order, etc.) between the text of Stephanus and the printed Greek text of the Elzevirs are often “errors of the press” (See Scrivener).



The term *Textus Receptus* is a Latin term which means ‘received text.’ In an effort to give the false impression that the T.R. is a fairly recent ‘invention,’ critics of the KJV promote the idea that the term was ‘*first* used in the preface of the Elzevir Greek text of 1633.’ In fact, the preface of the Elzevir 1633 edition does **not** use the words “*Textus Receptus*”; it states,

“Textum (text) *ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum* (received)...” meaning, ‘Therefore you have the **text** now **received by all.**’

Everyone recognized this as the Greek New Testament text. It was not the product of Erasmus, Elzevir, or any “private interpretation.” Those who have widely read in the field of textual history know that the term ‘*Textus Receptus*’ is not a title but a generic term used to refer to texts used, or ‘received’ by most people. As far back as 1533, 100 years before the Elzevirs used words like these, Sepulveda used the term *Vulgatam Graecum Editionem*, meaning common ‘Greek Edition.’ Even the Catholic Rheims New Testament

of 1582-1610, admitted in its preface that it did not follow the “common Greek text” (Maynard, p. 98).

The term *textus receptus* is often seen in reference to any vernacular edition commonly received among the people. For example, Yale University Press tells us, “Daniel Bomberg...produced the first printed Rabbinic Bible (that is, the Hebrew Scripture...[H]is second edition of 1524-25... prepared by Jacob ben Chayyim...became the **textus receptus**, the standard form of the Massoretic text...” (*The Reformation of the Bible*, p. 106).



Fifteen total editions of the Greek New Testament were printed by Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and the Elzevirs. They are, in the main, identical. The KJV translators availed themselves of all of these, as well as numerous Greek manuscripts and vernacular editions. On the title page of the KJV, the translators said that the King James Bible was “Translated out of the Originall Greeke.” They would not have made this claim if they did not have authoritative documentary proof or if they had followed any Latin Vulgate readings, as some critics, like Frederick Scrivener, claim.

In 1881, **F.H.A. SCRIVENER**, a textual critic and member of the corrupt Revised Version Committee of Westcott and Hort, attempted to create his own Greek *Textus Receptus*, by back-translating the KJV *into* Greek. As he was back-translating, Scrivener remarked that in insignificant details (spelling, word order, etc), the KJV seemed to follow Beza rather than Stephanus about 113 times, Stephanus rather than Beza in 59 places, Erasmus and others against both Stephanus and Beza about 80 times. These variants merely represent the errors these individual men or their printers made from “the Originall Greeke,” to which the KJV translators referred on their title page. The wealth of ancient and antique Bibles, which God providentially provided for the KJV translators, was not available to Mr. Scrivener almost 300 years later. These manuscripts and Bibles had passed on to collections around

the world. So, with Scrivener's so-called 'skills' of textual criticism, mixed with his own opinions, and truncated by the limits of his own bookshelf, **he altered this back-translation in a small number of places.** Scrivener admits his "corrected" places were "precarious," based on what he "presumed" and what "appears" to him to be "more likely" the correct data. To top it off, he followed "the punctuation of the **Revised Version.**" Also, he admits, "The paragraphs into which the body of the Greek text is here divided are those of the **Revised Version...**" (F.H.A. Scrivener, *The New Testament in Greek*, Cambridge: University Press, 1908 edition, pp. vii-xi, 655, 656; Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition: Its Subsequent Reprints*, p. 60).

Scrivener's Greek New Testament is sold today as the **Trinitarian Bible Society's** Greek *Textus Receptus*. Its preface states that it,

“...follows the text of Beza's 1598 edition as the **primary** [not complete] authority, and corresponds with the “*The New Testament in the **Original Greek** according to the text followed in the Authorized Version,*” **edited** by F.H.A. Scrivener...” (emphasis added).

The words “primary” (not complete) and “edited” [changed] are glossed over by many readers, who fall upon the presumptuous word, “the Original Greek.” In fact, it is **not** the text of Beza precisely; it is Scrivener's text. It is **not** precisely the Greek text followed by the KJV translators, but only those Greek readings to which Scrivener had access. Therefore it is **not**, in the *minutia* “the Originall Greeke,” cited on the preface page of the KJV.

This text of Scrivener is also sold by Hendrickson Publishers as J.P. Green's *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Its preface presumptuously states that it is “the original Greek” (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, pp. vi, xi).

I magine the irony of well-meaning scholars who state that a foreign translation should be made from the ‘original’ Greek (and not from the KJV), when the Greek [TBS Scrivener’s] they are using was translated *from the KJV*. It becomes a double irony when some mockingly chatter, “Are you saying that the KJV translators were inspired like Moses?” — when the printed Greek edition that they naively think is ‘the originals’ was edited by men, such as Scrivener, who were no more ‘inspired’ than the KJV translators. God’s *word* is inspired.

The only other ‘*Textus Receptus*’ Greek New Testament in print, is the 1550 edition of Stephanus. It is sold by Baker Books as the *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* by **George Ricker Berry**. As previously mentioned, it was not deemed accurate by the KJV translators in over 193 places. The Baker edition includes Berry’s blasphemous interlinear *English* translation above Stephanus’ Greek. Berry’s use of anti-Trinitarian liberal G.B. Winer’s *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, translated by J. Henry Thayer, makes Berry’s English interlinear useless. Furthermore, the English interlinear “has been drawn chiefly from Thayer.” (See the back of the paperback edition after p. 670, on p. v. preceding the dictionary in Baker’s reprint of the 1897 Hinds Noble edition.) Thayer was a Unitarian whose heresies were so well known in his day that the publisher introduced Thayer’s work with this warning:

“A word of caution is necessary. Thayer was a Unitarian, and the errors of this sect occasionally come through...The reader should be alert for both subtle and blatant denials of such doctrines as the Trinity (Thayer regarded Christ as a mere man and the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force)...and Biblical inerrancy (*Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1977, p. vii).

Consequently, in Baker’s hardback edition of 1981 there is an admission in its preface that Berry’s “literal translation is not finely tuned” (p. ix).

Yet how many hapless students read Berry's or the TBS Greek New Testament and assume that they are 'the Original Greek' and can 'correct' the Holy Bible (KJV).

Neither Berry's edition of Stephanus nor Scrivener's edition should be used, as some do today, to 'correct' the KJV. These texts can create unnecessary confusion for students who have one of these two printed editions and are comparing it to the Received Text of the KJV.

- For example, in Mark 2:15, the Received Text uses the name of Jesus *twice*. (e.g. See *Reina-Valera* pre-1599-1602, French 1599, Old Latin (pre-5th century), Tyndale 1526, Great Bible, Mathew's Bible, Bishops' Bible, the Geneva 1599, King James 1611, et al.). The mistake of including 'Jesus' *only once*, as seen in Berry's and Scrivener's Greek New Testaments, arises from a Latin text, as seen in Wycliffe's edition of 1389, taken in a few tiny points, as here, from a poor Latin source. When in doubt, the context will determine easily which is correct. If the name of 'Jesus' is replaced with the pronoun "He," as it is in the NASB and all new versions, "He" as a pronoun, could refer to "Levi" (seen in verse 14) as the antecedent, instead of "Jesus." God is not the author of confusion.

In Mark 2:15, the name of Jesus occurs twice in today's good foreign editions, such as the French, *Le Nouveau Testament (Traduit sur Les Textes Originaux Grecs Version D'Ostervald, Mission Baptiste Maranatha, 1996)*. 'Jesus,' as "Jezzus...Jezusem" is also twice in the Polish New Testament (*Biblia To Jest Cale Pismo Swiete Starego I Nowego Testamentu Z Hebrajskiego I Greckiego Jezyka Na Ploski Pilnie I Wiernie Przetlmaczona*). Both the French and the Polish state that they were translated out of the 'original' Greek ("Originaux Grecs," "Greckiego"). Even the sometimes corrupted 1960 edition of the pure

Spanish Reina-Valera Bible includes the name of ‘Jesus’ twice in this verse. Edward Hills states that it is more honoring to God to believe he has preserved the true text in the Bible *used* by the people, than to think he abandoned the truth to the library shelf of the “wise and prudent.” Scrivener and Berry “take away from the words” (Rev. 22:19).

- *Again*, in 2 Peter 1:1, the KJV follows the Greek New Testament (e.g. Elzevirs’) reading of “God and our Saviour,” rather than Stephanus’ reading of “our God and Saviour.” Those who have Berry’s edition of Stephanus would think the KJV did not follow *the* Greek, unless they looked at the fine print in Stephanus’ notes. (Dr. Kirk DiVietro has collated Berry’s edition against a copy of the original Stephanus and has discovered that Berry introduced a few errors when transcribing Stephanus’ notes.)
- *Beelzebub*, in the New Testament 7 times (e.g. Matt. 10:25), is spelled Beelzebub by pure vernacular Bibles (e.g. English, German, Latin, Bohemice, Italian, Galice, and Danish) as seen in the Nuremberg Polyglot of 1599. It is spelled in Berry’s and the TBS edition as Beelzebub. Did the entire body of Christ, worldwide, make a mistake, or did one apostate church (Greek Orthodox) or a few men carry forward an error? Jesus revealed truth to the “babes” who read Bibles, not the ‘brains,’ who spur revivals.
- Acts 19:20 states, “So mightily grew the word of **God** and prevailed,” in the KJV and *the most ancient versions*. The KJV reading “word of God” is based on a long history of ancient manuscripts and vernacular editions. Extant Greek manuscripts from as early as the 5th and 6th centuries, which representing much earlier texts, have the word “God” in this verse (e.g. D, E). The most ancient

versions use the word “God” (e.g. Old *Itala*, it^d, it^w fourth century; Syriac, syr^p fifth century, the Armenian Bible, written in the 300s by Chrysostom et al.) Beza Codex *Cantabrigiensis* uses “God” in both its Greek and Latin parallel edition (*Bezae Codex Cantabrigiensis*, ed. Frederick H. Scrivener, Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1864).

The United Bible Society’s 4th edition, edited by Catholic Cardinal Carlo **Maria** Martini, states that they are “almost,” but not quite sure that Acts 19:20 should say, “word of the **Lord**,” based on their favorite Vatican manuscript (pp. 3, 484). The NIV, TNIV, NASB, HCSB, ESV follow this corrupt text saying, “word of the **Lord**” in Acts 19:20. The NKJV also uses “Lord,” following the pitiful Hodges-Farstad *so-called* Majority Text, which naively follows von Sodden’s error-filled collation of *a small number of manuscripts*. Both Berry (Stephanus) and Scrivener also replace “God” with “Lord.”

When manuscripts are divided, the KJV always pays particular attention to the context and always brings out the deity of Christ. Although there are some manuscripts which use the word “Lord,” the word “God” is critical here in proclaiming the deity of Christ. The book of Acts progressively builds a case for the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 4 through 18 begins using the phrase “word of God” eleven times. Acts 8 through 15 follows, using the phrase “word of the Lord” six times. (This is similar to the pattern of the initial use of the term “God” in the Old Testament, *followed by* the introduction of the word “LORD.”) Old Testament Jews knew about the “word of God” and the “word of the Lord.” Acts 19:10 introduces the deity of Christ with the phrase, “word of the Lord Jesus.” Through this phrase readers are being taught that the “Lord” of the Old Testament was “Jesus.” Acts 19:20, culminates returning to the use of the phrase “word

of God,” thereby showing that Jesus is not only the “Lord,” but he is also “God.” The study of a verse’s context and theological import will always determine the correct reading, when a question arises.

None of these microscopic differences between the KJV and **today’s printed** one-man editions of the ‘Textus Receptus’ are of major consequence. They are insignificant compared to the thousands upon thousands of **serious** differences between the pure *Textus Receptus* text type and the corrupt new versions’ minority text type.

Authority must remain with the Bible in use, not with the critical edition of one man or one ecclesiastical tradition. Scrivener’s and Berry’s *printed editions* are not ‘authoritative’ or to be regarded as ‘the Original Greek’ “in the microscopic points of detail,” where they differ from the manuscript tradition or the King James Bible and other great vernacular Bibles (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 499). The scriptures are of no “private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20). These minute varieties exist between today’s printed editions of the pure Greek New Testament, because each of these critical (meaning analyzed) editions are the product of *one* man — an intellectual exercise, so to speak. These *particular editions* were never read and used by the *masses* of Greek-speaking true Christians.

It must be remembered that even the 5200 existing *handwritten* Greek manuscripts were the product of the **Greek Orthodox Church**. Its membership has never been made up of true believers. The scriptures have been entrusted to the priesthood of true believers, just as they were entrusted to the Hebrew priests in the Old Testament. Unbelievers, Greek speaking or otherwise, cannot discern spiritual things. (In fact, Greece, under the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church, is today and has always been, one of the least receptive countries to the gospel. Their laws restricting the propagation of the gospel are some of the most stringent in the world.)

Scrivener's and Berry's printed Greek editions of the *Textus Receptus* must be understood to be what they are and nothing more. They are **excellent tools** to prove that the Received Text readings of the KJV are, in fact, based on a long history of Greek editions. They are also **excellent tools** to prove wrong the corrupt editions of the Greek New Testament, such as the UBS, Nestle, Westcott & Hort, and Hodges-Farstad Greek Texts, which underlie the new versions. The complete history, as well as the gross errors of these corrupt Greek New Testaments, underlying the TNIV, NIV, HCSB, ESB, and NASB, is discussed thoroughly in the exhaustive 700 page bestseller, *New Age Bible Versions* (G.A. Riplinger, Ararat, VA: A.V. Publications, 1993).

The topic of Bible inspiration and infallibility can only be discussed with reference to actual words and verses. A fog of emotional steam, that carries no substance, precedes comments such as, 'I don't believe the KJV corrects 'the original *Greek*' or 'I don't believe the KJV corrects the 'Majority Text' or the '*Textus Receptus*.' The desire to *appear* intelligent or superior by referring to 'the Greek' and downplaying the common man's Bible, exposes a naivety concerning textual history and those documents which today's pseudo-intellectuals call '*the critical text*,' '*the original Greek*,' *the* 'Majority Text,' or *the* '*Textus Receptus*.' There existed a true original Greek (i.e. Majority Text, *Textus Receptus*). It is not in print and never will be, because it is unnecessary. No one on the planet speaks first century Koine Greek, so God is finished with it. He needs no 'Dead Bible Society' to translate it into "everyday English," using the same corrupt secularized lexicons used by the TNIV, NIV, NASB and HCSB (quote on file). God has not called readers to check his Holy Bible for errors. He has called his Holy Bible to check *us* for errors.

What Would Jesus Do?

- Inspire a Bible people can read?
- Inspire conflicting Greek editions which few can read?
- Inspire unsaved liberals to write conflicting Greek lexicons to translate conflicting one-man Greek editions?
- Inspire originals, then loose them?

Just as Wycliffe, Coverdale, and the KJV translators were not ‘Greek-only,’ Erasmus also consulted foreign language translations in his analysis of the Bible’s text. Froude writes of Erasmus,

“[H]e had lived in every country in Europe...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 35).

During the four years Erasmus taught at Cambridge University, he researched Greek manuscripts *and ancient vernacular Bibles*. Erasmus wrote to a friend,

“After collation of Greek **and other ancient manuscripts**, I have emended the whole new testament [correcting corrupt Latin and Greek editions], and I have annotated [made notes next to] over a thousand passages...” (The word ‘ancient’ refers to the years **before** the fall of the Western Roman Empire, about **A.D. 475**; *Collected Works of Erasmus* translated by R.A.B. Mynors and D.S.F. Thomson, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, vol. 2, p. 300; see *Epistle (The Correspondence of Erasmus)* p. 296.)

Will Durant said Erasmus was the “the richest and quickest mind of that brilliant age” (Durant, p. 290). “He had a reputation, which detraction could not take from him, of being the most learned and clearest-sighted of living men” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 308).

“[H]e was in a singularly true sense the center of the literary movement of his time. In his correspondence he put himself in touch with more than five hundred men of the highest importance **in the world** of politics and thought, and his advise on all kinds of subjects was eagerly sought... (New *Schaff-Herzog*, p. 164).

Henry VIII of **England** wrote to Erasmus and begged him to return to England, saying,

“[Y]ou have applied your talents in the advancement of Christian truth” (Durant, p. 276).

Francis I of **Paris**, Charles of the **Netherlands** and **Spain**, Margaret of the **Low countries**, the King of **Hungary**, the Archbishop of **Canterbury**, Pope Leo, and Pope Hadrian, all urged him, to no avail, to become a part of their entourage. The Universities of **Cambridge**, **Oxford**, **Louvain**, **Basel**, and **Vienna** strove for his presence.

“He was offered many positions of honor and profit in the academic world, but declined them all...” (*New Schaff-Herzog*, p. 164).

“Erasmus could have had benefices, episcopacies, even later, a cardinal’s hat; he refused such offers time and again in order to remain a ‘freelance,’ intellectually fetterless” (Durant, p. 274).

“[H]e continued to refuse lucrative posts that would have extended his income at the cost of his freedom” (Durant, p. 289). Erasmus wrote,

“The Emperor wants me in **Spain**, Ferdinand wants me at **Vienna**, the Regent Margaret invites me to **Brabant**, the King of **England** to London. Each offers me an ample salary, and this they can give...[L]earned men of whom I have never heard, write daily to me, to say nothing of kings and princes and high prelates who are known to all mankind...The French King invites me to **Paris**...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 350-351, 377).

Bainton writes, “[T]he consummate scholar Erasmus was the star of his age, who, though he might have lived opulently in **France, Germany, or Italy...**” (Bainton, p. 103).

“He conceived of himself as, above all else,
a preacher of righteousness”

(*New Schaff-Herzog*, p. 164).



How did Erasmus know *exactly* which words should be in the Bible? Likewise, how did the translators of Reformation Bibles, like the King James Bible of 1611, the French *Olivetan*, the Dutch *Statenvertaling*, the German Luther Bible, the Italian *Diodati*, and the Spanish *Valera* know what readings were accepted by the true body of Christ? Follow Erasmus on this guided tour of Europe in the centuries *preceding* his Greek New Testament text and the KJV. It will become clear that “the word of God grew and multiplied” between Acts 2 and 1502 (Acts 12:24).

MEMORIZED SCRIPTURE

As we have seen, all true Christians in Europe and England, from the time of Christ until the 1500s, knew the difference between the real Bible and the corrupt readings of the Catholic church, seen today in the TNIV, NIV, HCSB, ESV, NASB, and Jehovah Witness Version. But how? — By memorization.

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11)

In countries where paper was scarce, people were poor, and persecution was plenty, Christians memorized the Bible. This probably includes a large percentage of the Christians who have ever lived.

The *Cambridge History of the Bible* (p. 427) recounts “an inquisitor’s tract written about 1260”:

“FOR I have heard and seen a certain
unlettered countryman,
who used to recite Job
word for word,
and **many others who**
knew the whole New Testament perfectly”

(See M. Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, 1920, p. 62).

The translators of the Ferrara **Bible** [Spain 1400s] tell us that they had all the versions, both ancient and modern, at their disposal...

“WE can safely say
that they would have been able
to reproduce much the same
translation
as we have ...
Through long years of
memorization
and recitation...”

(*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 475).

SINCE Erasmus spent his entire life devoted to the study of the Scriptures, he knew much, if not all of the New Testament, by heart. Of his hero Vitrier, Erasmus said,

“HE knew the letters of Paul by heart,
and when I asked him
how he prepared for preaching,
he replied that he would sink himself in Paul
till his heart took flame” (Bainton, p. 64).

The *Cambridge History of the Bible* states,

“No doubt only a small part of the translations actually made have come down to us” “There are immense gaps in our knowledge...[O]ral tradition was important, too” (vol. 2, pp. 427, 424).

Luther “was influenced by an oral tradition of German translation which is hard to identify” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. III, p. 100).

The proliferation of printed Bibles in America in the last hundred years may not be typical. How much better to be poor and have the word of God hid in the heart, than to be rich and have it hid on the shelf.

The recent amazing report of the conversion to Christianity of former Soviet premier **Nikita S. Khrushchev**, included his testimony that,

“...as a child he had learned
the gospel of John
verbatim...”

(Reported in *Dayspring*, vol. 3, 2000, p. 24. Gilbert Egerton, editor, 15a Whyte Acres, Castlewellan Road, Banbridge, Co. Down, Northern Ireland BT32 4HZ.)

Khrushchev did not say he had memorized “John 3:16”; he said he had memorized the *entire* book of John. The seed of childhood scripture memorization brought forth fruit, out of season, and he was deposed from office.

(Children’s church, Sunday schools, and camps need Christ’s word — not ‘crafts’ — learned. ‘Bible’ videos are no better teachers than secular TV and video games. Parents and children’s teachers, who seat children in front of the cartoon or real ‘actors’ on ‘screens’, thinking it will quiet them, will find that when the program or game is over, the children will ‘act’ up, and their ‘screams’ will replicate the media’s higher than normal decibel level. Watch children in the pediatrician’s office. Those who have animated cartoons for babysitters are highly ‘animated’ (from the same root word as ‘animal’). The media’s frantic flashing frames, which purposefully alternate from dark to light for the hypnotic effect, cause attention deficient disorder, the inability to concentrate for extended periods, and a distaste for the calm “still small voice” of God in the scriptures. How much better are the “still waters” of the scriptures, whose rhythms calm and satisfy the soul (Psalm 23). Faith or sight? Images or the word of God? — *that* has been the question since man carved his first pagan idol. The technology has changed, but the temptation (the lusts of the eyes) continues. Khrushchev was reared before TV; thank God. How lean will be the following generations, unless weaned from their ‘screens’?)

PRE-ERASMUS: *ITALA* & ITALIAN BIBLES

(A.D. 1-1500)

What Bibles had Erasmus and early Christians meditated upon? The extended amount of time Erasmus' spent in the "Roman libraries," and the other libraries of Italy on his several tours there, would have exposed him to the text of the Old *Itala* (Latin) Bible (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 86). Since Erasmus was *the* world's leading authority on Latin, he could easily read the Old *Itala*, and its offshoot, Italian, which was spoken in Italy during his tenure there. The Old *Itala* Bible, dating back to the time of the apostles, matches Erasmus' Greek New Testament and the King James Bible. (This author collated them.) Even Augustine in his fourth century writing, *De doctrina Christiana*, admitted that 'in the early centuries of the church, a very great number of Latin' [pre-Jerome] Bibles were available, saying,

"Now among the translations themselves the Italian (*Itala*) is to be preferred to the others, for it keeps closer to the words without prejudice..." (Metzger, *Early Versions*, p. 291).

Erasmus wrote in his Preface that he consulted, not the Latin Vulgate, but these ancient Italic Bibles. "*Sunt in quibus nostra Vulgata magis probatur editio, aut Ambrosiana lectio, quam Graeci Codices. Et tamen consentientibus omnibus Graecis exemplaribus, quoniam illa mutare non licuit Latina accomodavimus, ne non responderent, quum in hoc ipsum adderentur*" (*Nov. Test. Praef.*, Basil: Froeben, 1546, p. xi).

Manuscripts and fragments of this ancient text type, still available today, include the following: forty-six manuscripts for the Gospels, nineteen for Acts, twenty for Paul (including Hebrews), twelve for the other Epistles, and **seven for the book of Revelation** (Metzger, *The Early Version*, p. 294). The Latin readings Erasmus had for the book of Revelation date back to the first and second century, as evidenced by the still extant Old *Itala* manuscripts of the book of Revelation: *c*(6), *dem* (59), *g*(51), *h* (55), *m* (PS-AU spe), *reg* (T), *t* (56), and *z* (65) (Metzger, *The Early Versions*, p. 308).

JEROME corrupted this pure Old *Itala* Bible in the fourth century. He admitted in his Preface,

“You [Pope Damasus] urge me to revise the Old Latin, and, as it were, to sit in judgment on the copies of Scriptures which are now scattered **throughout the world**...Is there not a man, learned or unlearned, who will not, when he takes the volume in hand...call me a forger and a profane person for having had the audacity to add anything to the ancient books, or to make changes...” (See Wordsworth and White, *Novum Testamentum...Latine*, vol. I, pp. 1-4 or any critical edition of the corrupt Latin Vulgate).

In Jerome’s *Prologue to the Catholic Epistles*, “Preserved in the Codex Fuldensis” (PL 29, 827-31), he admits that Christians “have pronounced to have branded me a falsifier and a corrupter of the Sacred Scriptures” (Lit. “*qui me falsarium corruptoremque sacrarum pronunciant Scripturarum*”). Even Metzger admits,

“Jerome’s apprehension that he would be castigated for tampering with the Holy Writ was not unfounded. His revision of the Latin Bible provoked both criticism and anger, sometimes with extraordinary vehemence.”

“According to Augustine (*Epist.* lxxi), during the reading of the Scripture lesson in a service of worship at Oea, a town in North Africa, when the congregation heard that Jonah rested under a hederia (‘ivy’), instead of the familiar *cucurbita* (‘**gourd**’) of the **early** Latin versions, such a fanatical **tumult** was raised that the Bishop was nearly left without a flock!” (Metzger, *The Early Versions*, p. 334).

Is there any wonder that there is a tumult in churches today, as Jerome's clansmen plant their word-burning bibles on their pulpits? As usual, the oldest reading in Jonah 4:6 is in the KJV.

KJV	NIV	NASB	NKJV	ESV
a gourd	a vine	a plant	a plant	a plant

Jerome's corrupt Catholic Latin readings match the ESV, NIV, NASB, Jehovah Witness version, and most new versions *place after place*. Visit a Christian bookstore and compare the texts of their Catholic *New American Bible* with the often matching texts of a TNIV, NIV, HCSB, ESV or NASB.

The TNIV, NIV, NASB, ESV, HCSB, Jehovah Witness Version and most new versions are the corrupt Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate, under a different cover. Examine the identical wording. (Portions of this comparison were adapted from James Sightler's *A Testimony Founded Forever: The King James Bible Defended In Faith and History*, Greenville, S.C.: Sightler Publications, 2nd edition).

Colossians 1:14 The blood atonement

KJV	In whom we have redemption through his blood
Latin Vulgate	in quo havemus redemptionem ✂ -----
TNIV, NIV, HCSB	in whom we have redemption -----
NASB, ESV	in whom we have redemption -----
Jehovah Witness	by means of whom we have release by ransom-----

1 Timothy 3:16 The deity of Christ

KJV	God was manifest in the flesh
Latin Vulgate	--- pietatis sacramentun quod manifestatum est in carne (sacrament of piety manifested in the flesh)
TNIV, NIV	He appeared in a body
NASB	He who was revealed in the flesh
HCSB, ESV	He was manifested in the flesh

Ephesians 3:9 The deity of Christ

KJV	God, who created all things by Jesus Christ
Latin Vulgate	Deo, qui omnia creavit ✂ -----
TNIV, NIV, HCSB	God, who created all things -----
NASB, ESV	God, who created all things -----
Jehovah Witness	God, who created all things -----

Luke 2:33 The virgin birth (Joseph was not Jesus' Father.)

KJV	And Joseph and his mother marvelled
Latin Vulgate	et erat pater [father] eius et mater mirantes
TNIV, NIV	The child's father and mother marveled
NASB, HCSB	And His father and mother were amazed
ESV	And his father and his mother marveled
Jehovah Witness	And its father and mother continued wondering

1 Corinthians 5:7 Sinfulness of man

KJV	For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us
Latin Vulgate	pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus ✂ ---
TNIV, NIV, ESV	For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed ---
HCSB	For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed ---
NASB	For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed ---
Jehovah Witness	For, indeed, Christ our passover has been sacrificed ---

Matthew 23:14 Woe to the scribes [those who handle the scriptures].

KJV	Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.
Latin Vulgate	✂ OMIT
TNIV, NIV	✂ OMIT
ESV, J.W.	✂ OMIT
NASB, HCSB	[BRACKET]

John 5:29 Second chance (e.g. Catholic Purgatory, Hindu transmigration of souls, etc.)

KJV	the resurrection of damnation
Latin Vulgate	resurrectionem iudici
NASB	a resurrection of judgment
ESV, HCSB	resurrection of judgment
Jehovah Witness	resurrection of judgment

In pagan **Roman mythology**, Lucifer was vaunted as ‘the day **star**,’ Christ himself. The **Roman Catholic** church continued this myth in their Latin Vulgate bible by matching the word ‘lucifer’ in both Isaiah 14:12 (about the devil) and 2 Peter 1:19 (about Jesus Christ). Modern versions and lexicons continue this dangerous myth. The word Lucifer means ‘light bearer.’ The word ‘**star**’ is *not* in the Hebrew Old Testament in Isaiah 14:12. New versions’ use of the word ‘star’ there is not a translation, but an *interpretation*, from lexicons that follow Roman **mythology**. (Alexander Murray, Dept. of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum, *Who’s Who In Mythology*, NY: Portland House, p. 168.)

	Isaiah 14:12 The Devil	2 Peter 1:19 Jesus
KJV	Lucifer	day star
Latin Vulgate	lucifer	lucifer
NASB	star of the morning (*note directs reader to 2 Peter 1:19!)	morning star
NKJV	*Lucifer Lit. Day Star	day star
TNIV, NIV	morning star	morning star
ESV	Day Star	morning star

The chart above shows just a tiny sample of the thousands upon thousands of identical matches which fuse the new versions (just about all of them), the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate, and the Jehovah Witness New World Translation.

When Erasmus was in Italy he would have seen, not only the ancient pure Old *Itala* manuscripts, but the Italian Bibles of his day, as well. These Italian Bibles did not match the corrupt Latin Vulgate of Jerome, according to Samuel Berger, who has done *the* definitive work on the history of the Italian translations (*Romania*, vol. XVIII (1889, p. 353-438) XIX, (1890), XXIII, (1890, 1894, pp. 358-431) XVII, (1888, p. 121 et al.).

“Berger’s general conclusion was that Italian translators depended in large

measure on previous French and Provençal versions...before the mid-thirteenth century and representing, in part at least, **non-Vulgate** versions....These conclusions have been accepted in the main...[T]he formation of the Italian Bible was influenced by transalpine versions...It is probable...that the first Italian versions were the work of Waldensian...[and] certain variant readings found in these..." (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. II, pp. 459, 460 et al.).

The Waldensians were *true* Christians, who were, considered "heretics" by the Catholic church. Despite being surrounded by the tyrannical Catholic church, the true Christians of Italy had the real Bible. Praise the Lord!

In spite of Rome's penchant for burning *real* Bibles, *The Cambridge History of the Bible* lists over one dozen vernacular Italian Bible manuscripts still in existence; most of these contain the book of Revelation (vol. 2, p. 453).

"Among Italian Christians in the Middle Ages, the parts of the bible for which translations were in the most demand seem to have been the Gospels, and the Psalter, the Proverbs...the Apocalypse [the book of Revelation]." "The Apocalypse [book of Revelation] is found in at least ten manuscripts, in one of which the version seems to derive from a Catalan text, itself derived for a French version" (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 454, 455, 456).

We are sometimes given the false impression that during the Middle Ages, the only Bibles were those produced by a few monks who created illuminated (painted) manuscripts of somewhat corrupt Latin Bibles. On the contrary, F. Somer Merryweather asserts that "secular copyists...were an important class during the Middle Ages" and "ancient

manuscripts were by no means so very scarce...” “The price for copying a Bible was” only “eighty Bolognese livres...” Those seeking their skills “were particularly numerous in the tenth century...” (F. Somer Merryweather, *Bibliomania in the Middle Ages*, NY: Benjamin Blom, Inc. 1972 (originally London, 1933) pp. 52, 53, 54).

Today we have copies of Italian Bibles that would have been very familiar to Erasmus: the Tuscan version of the early 1200s, a Venetian dialect Bible of the 1300s, the Riccardiani Bible of 1252, the Malermi Bible of 1420, and the Jenson Italian Bible. Erasmus would have had no problem determining what readings were accepted by the *real* body of Christ in Italy.

ERASMUS: GOTHIC BIBLES (A.D. PRE-350-1500)

Erasmus spent time in England, teaching Greek to English students at Cambridge University. Although he was not a native speaker of English, Durant states that he spoke English (Durant, pp. 273, 291 et al.). Its Gothic, Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman roots would make it easily understandable to Erasmus, who spoke Dutch, an offshoot of these same Germanic tongues.

The Goths, an east Germanic people, extend back to the time of Christ. The scriptures no doubt reached them as “the scriptures” quickly spread “to all nations” (Romans 16:26). The gift of tongues included the languages of “**every** nation under heaven,” including those “strangers” (Acts 2: 5, 10) on the Black Sea, where the Goths lived at the time of Christ and could still be found at the time of Erasmus (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 339). We are most familiar with the Gothic Bible of Ulfilas, who Philostorgius states copied or translated the entire Gothic Bible (except Kings) (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 362). The Gothic Gospels, among the oldest of the vernacular versions, match the text of Erasmus and the King James Bible.

THE original Greek manuscript or manuscripts, from which Ulfilas made his translation of the Gothic Gospels, belonged to the Byzantine group [KJV type]...As in the Gospels, the original Greek text in the epistles was of the Byzantine type...and differs very little from the fully developed *Textus receptus* of the later period”
(*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 347, 355).

Students who had a corrupt UBS [United Bible Society] Greek New Testament in its earlier (1st-3rd) editions could read in the notes, buried at the bottom of the page in its critical apparatus, references documenting the affinity of the Gothic and the KJV texts. However, this fact weighed too heavily in favor of the King James Bible. It proved that the most ancient version of the Bible did not match the new versions. The now current UBS 4th edition has *omitted* these most important references to the Gothic edition. Even Bruce Metzger, an editor for the UBS text, admits the new edition’s critical error in dropping the references to the Gothic Bible. He says,

“On the negative side was the elimination, for some unexplained reason, of evidence of the Gothic version, made by Ulfilas about A.D. 385” (Bruce Metzger, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian*, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1997, p. 73).

A man such as Erasmus, who combed Europe searching for the most ancient readings of the New Testament (See his *Annotations on the Greek New Testament*) would have seen this Bible of the Goths, still extant today in the Codices *Argenteus*, *Carolinus*, *Ambrosiani*, *Taurinensis*. The Gothic codex *Argenteus* was in Italy before A.D. 795 and was housed near Erasmus in the 1500s in a German monastery (“Werden on the Ruhr in Westphalia”) (Metzger, *The Early Versions*, pp. 378-379). Since the Goths sacked Rome and remained there for some time, Erasmus no doubt also saw this Gothic Bible as he combed the libraries of Italy. The Brixian

manuscript, a Gothic and Latin parallel Bible, shows the strong affinity of the Goths and Italians in the ensuing years. If someone pretends that a West-Germanic Dutchman, such as Erasmus, could not read Gothic, try reading it yourself:

Gothic A.D. 350 KJV

Luke 20:28	whis brothar	his brother
Luke 20:42	In bokom Psalmo	In the book of Psalms
Luke 14:19	Yuka auhsne	yoke of oxen

(Pronunciation was 'yoke a oxen')

In the following comparisons, notice that the KJV matches the Gothic Bible from A.D. 350; the NIV matches the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* instead. The KJV retains the consonants with their important phonaesthetic value. The Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* and its undercovers, the TNIV and NIV, do not match this ancient pure Bible.

Gothic A.D. 350 KJV TNIV, NIV, JB

Jn 10:9	Ik im thata daur	I am the door	I am the gate
Lk 8:30	Wha ist namo thein	What is thy name	What is your name
Mk 9:3	wheitos swe snaiws	white as snow	dazzling white

(See Joseph Bosworth, *The Gospels: Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Wycliffe and Tyndale Version*, London: Gibbings and Co., 1907, pp. ii, iii, et al..)

The readings of the Gothic Gospels and Epistles are considered as old as those of the corrupt Greek *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts, which the TNIV, NIV, ESV, HCSB, and NASB follow. The gift of tongues, which enabled the apostles to go to the surrounding peoples and preach the gospel, no doubt extended to their Gothic neighbors to the north. It appears the King James Bible *would have been* good enough for Paul, who spoke with tongues, “more than ye all,” for as the reader can see, Gothic sometimes *sounds* very much like English.

PRE-ERASMUS: **ANGLO-SAXONS** BIBLES

(A.D. 500-1500)

The soil of Erasmus' youth served as a bridge which had been traversed by the Anglo-Saxons in A.D. 449, as they branched from Europe to England. Erasmus spent most of his life on the European continents' edge, less than 100 miles from England. Because of this proximity, there was a language in northern Holland that was very similar to old English. The Latin Bible, with which Erasmus was so familiar, existed in an edition with an interlinear Anglo-Saxon Bible, still extant today as the Lindisfarne Gospels. Erasmus had immediate access to this vernacular Bible, (as well as to the West-Saxon Gospels of the 1200s).

ANGLO-SAXON **TEXT TYPE**

The Anglo-Saxon Bible, used from the 6th to 10th centuries, matches the KJV, not the new versions. Bosworth writes,

“This MS of the Gospels, sent by Gregory the Great, is not the Vulgate, but the old Latin, the *Vetus Italica*, in constant use until the time of Jerome...As the **Anglo-Saxon** Version was made from the *Vetus Italica*, it may be useful in ascertaining the readings of the oldest Latin Version. We may cite one or two examples more in proof that the Anglo-Saxon was from the *Vetus Italica*, and not from Jerome's Vulgate” (Joseph Bosworth, *The Gospels: Gothic Anglo-Saxon, Wycliffe, and Tyndale Versions*, London: Gibbings and Company, 1907, p. xi).

This proves wrong the church of Rome's claim to King James I that, “what Scriptures we have, we had them from Rome” (from a tract sent to King James I entitled, “A Petition Apologetical”). The entire tract and Romish claims were wrongly based on this Bible which Gregory ‘the Great’ sent to England in the 6th century, still “in existence in the time of James I.” Rome's so-called “proof that we derived our knowledge of Scripture originally from the church of Rome” crashes to

the ground with Bosworth's collations of the Anglo-Saxon Bible and the non-Vulgate *Itala* (Merryweather, p. 91).

AVAILABILITY OF ANGLO-SAXON BIBLES

An entire book has been written to dispel the myth that Bibles and books were rare objects during the Middle Ages (c. 500-1500). Its title, *Bibliomania In the Middle Ages*, describes the enthusiasm for Bibles and books that its authors discovered. He writes,

“[I]nspite of all those outcries which have been so repeatedly raised against the illiterate state of the **dark ages**...labours have produced evidence of what few anticipated, and some even now deny...that in the olden time, in “**merrie Englande**” a passion which Dibdin has christened **Bibliomania** existed...That the learning of the Middle Ages has been carelessly represented there can be little doubt...” (*Bibliomania*, pp. 17, 18).

Merryweather discovered that the thousands of manuscripts remaining, “are but a small portion” of those which had existed. “In England, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans were each successively the destroyers” of libraries, Bibles, and books (Merryweather, p. 20). He researched the catalogues of libraries, which had been destroyed or dismantled. They listed a treasure trove of Bibles. In just one library, its recovered catalogue listed,

“[M]any a rare Hebrew MS. Bible, *bibliotheca hebraice*...There were no less than twenty volumes in this ancient language. But we often find Hebrew manuscripts...after the eleventh century. The Jews, who came over in great numbers about that time, were possessed of many valuable books, and spread a knowledge of their language and literature among the students...” (Merryweather, p. 225).

“[G]reat was the demand” for “secular scribes” that copied Bibles. “[T]he profession was flourishing in Saxon times...in the seventh and eighth centuries.” Popular were “book merchants,” “circulating” and “public” libraries, and “book marts to rummage over the stalls,” where “for a few sous” a Bible, New Testament or book could be had in Europe (and England). An old register lists a “Bible Concordance, 9 sous” and “A Bible, 10 sous.” Paper for Bibles was available, and “in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a dozen skins of parchment could be bought for sixpence” (Merryweather, pp. 53-54, 59, 60, 61, 70).

KINGS & TEXTS OF ANGLO-SAXON BIBLES

KING AELFRIDE of Northumbria (c. 680) was “learned in Holy Scripture” (Merryweather, p. 159). His namesake, Anglo-Saxon ruler, **KING ALFRED** (800s) later commanded,

“*A*ll the freeborn youth of his kingdom should employ themselves on nothing till they could first **read** well the **English Scripture**” (J. Paterson Smyth, *How We Got Our Bible*, London: Winnipeg, Russell, Lang & Co., 1911 edition, p. 56, before the “re-written” 1915 edition).

King Alfred’s contemporary, William of Malmesbury, said that “in all his journeys it was his custom to repeat **the whole psalter** [all of the book of Psalms!] in order to keep his attendant clerk from such vain talk as is the common snare of travelers; and that ‘lying, standing, walking, sitting, he had always a psalm on his lips, always Christ in his heart.’” King Alfred, who knew Greek, translated the Bible into Anglo-Saxon (Merryweather, pp. 151, 152). Alfred’s piety was known world-wide, as Cipriano de Valera mentions it in the Preface to his 1602 Spanish Bible. Valera also writes of an English Bible, earlier than most care to admit. He writes, “In times of Aelthstan, who once reigned in what we now call England, about A.D. 900, the Bible was translated to British, which was the language used then in that island.” The Saxon Bible of **Aelfric** (c. 995) was widely circulated. Aelfric wrote,

“I ventured to translate...the Holy Scriptures, into our common language; for the edification of the ignorant, who only understand this language...Wherefore I have...given the plain English. By which means the hearts, both of the readers and of the hearers, may be reached more easily; because they are incapable of being otherwise instructed, than in their native tongue...I trust through the grace of God, that I ought to translate this book...into the English language...” (Merryweather, pp. 80, 81, 83).

Spiritual and doctrinal discernment was high among true believers during the Anglo-Saxon period. “The Saxon Church ever denied the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation...Aelfric [wrote] against transubstantiation...” [that is, the false doctrine that Christ’s physical flesh is in the communion] (Merryweather, p. 83). Aelfric sought, through access to the translated Bible, to “shake off a little of their absurd dependence on **secondary sources** for biblical instruction.” [Today second hand sources are sold piecemeal via comments such as, ‘That word in the original languages has the sense of...’ Such exegesis is nothing more than a *man*, reading another *man*’s lexicon, both usurping the authority of the **Holy Bible**. Romish priests in the Middle Ages privately interpreted every word of the Bible with their corrupt Latin text. Today, ‘Romish’ teachers attack our English Bible word by word.] Pure Bibles were used; corrupt ones usually sat on library shelves. One Anglo-Saxon translator “was always anxious...to compare their various readings” (Merryweather, p. 90).

“In the year 1077, **Gundulph**, a Norman...applied his patience and erudition” to a “careful revisal of the Holy Scriptures. He purged the sacred volume of the inadvertencies of the scribes, and restored the purity of the text.” William of Malmesbury, a staunch Christian and anti-Romanist, “highly extols him...‘for his abundant piety.’” Gundulph wrote a Bible that was “rendered pure in its text” (Merryweather, pp. 97, 98, 99).

Between 1200 and 1400 scores of “concordances, bible dictionaries...and etymologies” abounded (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 380). The Ormulum Gospel Harmony would also have been accessible to Erasmus, as would the early English-Latin Bible commentary of Richard Rolle, done in the early 1300s. A glimpse here at the Anglo-Saxon Bible shows that the KJV retains its wording, the TNIV and NIV do not. Once again we see that the English Bible has remained the same since the origin of the English language (See Smyth, p. 60).

Anglo-Saxon	KJV	TNIV, NIV
Matt. 7:27	thaer comun flod	the floods came
		the streams rose

A Scottish translation, done in the 1300s by Murdoch Nisbet was available to Erasmus. The Anglo-Norman Bible, possessed by one John de Welles in 1361, would also have been accessible for his use (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 448). Erasmus would have had at hand the translation of Revelation, with commentary, by William Gifford (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 379).

A Fourteenth Century English Biblical Version, reprinted by Cambridge University Press (edited by Anna C. Paus, 1904, p. 41) reveals that the English people with whom Erasmus came into contact, had a Bible text, like the one he was to print in Greek. It contains *all* of 1 John 5:7 and reads quite easily, beginning, “For ther beth thre that beueth wytnesse in hefne, the Fader, ...”

Erasmus and the translators of the KJV knew what the Bible had said to the English speaking peoples since its origin. They would have felt the wrath of all Christendom if they had followed the readings seen in those remote and never used Catholic manuscripts, seen too widely today in the TNIV, NIV, HCSB, ESV, NASB and the Jehovah Witness version.

PRE-ERASMUS: GERMAN BIBLES

(A.D. 600 - 1500)

The Dutch language of Erasmus underwent the High-German consonant-mutation, and thus is near in form to English and Scandinavian. However, German would still be highly recognizable to a *deutschman*, like Erasmus. The term 'Dutch,' really means *deutsch* or German. Froude says that Erasmus did speak German (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 35). Erasmus referred to Germany as "my Germany" (Bainton, p. 129). He could not present Europe with a Greek New Testament that did not match the beloved scriptures of his next-door neighbors in Germany. Germany and its Christian people were teeming with a knowledge of scripture; "The habit of vernacular Bible study...was too widespread to be rooted out now" (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 432).

The Bavarian German dialect book of Matthew from the 600s is still extant today. The Lord's prayer is extant from A.D. 802 in Frisian, the land of Erasmus. Because the Old Frisian Bible of the 1000s came from the precise area where Erasmus spent most of his life, no doubt he would have seen many copies of it. Also still extant are the East Franconian German Gospels of A.D. 830. Parts of a Saxon Bible, dated A.D. 850, have been found. 'Heresy' trials report German translations considered 'heretical' (that is, non-Latin Vulgate) were circulating in 1231.

Between 1300 and 1400, numerous German translations of both the Old and New Testaments were produced. Among these were the works of Matthew of Beheim in 1343 and Henry of Mügeln in 1365. The complete New Testament is extant in High German in the Augsburg Bible of 1350. It *contains* I John 5:7, as do eighteen pre-Luther German Bibles. In error, Luther removed this verse in his edition of 1522, but German Bibles, as a whole, still had it, as seen in the Swiss German Bibles of 1524/25 and the 'Luther' Bible of 1581 (See Maynard, Michael, *The History of the Debate Over I John 5:7-8*, Tempe, Arizona: Comma Publications, 1995, p. 97 et al.). The German Old Testament can be seen in the Wenzel Bible of 1389.

The Codex Teplensis (Tepl Bible) of 1389 is thought to be of the Waldensian text type (KJV) and not a Latin text type (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 432). This is evident because it does not invert 1 John 5:7, as the corrupt Latin does. Even Metzger admits it is non-Vulgate in Acts and the epistles (Metzger, Bruce, *The Early Versions of the New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 304). It is written in Middle High German and contains the KJV readings in 1 John 5:7, Acts 8:37, 9:5, 6, and 15:34, which are missing in new versions (Maynard, pp. 61-63).

The New Testament books, including “...Revelation, are all extant from this period in High German” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 432). Today’s pure German Bible, like the KJV, says “Lord Jesus **Christ**” (*Herrn Jesu Christi*) in Rev. 22:21 (*Luther German Translation*, Middlebury, IN: Christian Mission Charities, P.O. Box 523). This reading matches the majority of Greek manuscripts, as well as the ancient Old Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Armenian versions (as well as being identical to the closing words in most of the books of the New Testament!). The TNIV, NIV ESV, HCSB, and NASB err and drop the word “Christ.”

The first *printed* complete German Bible is the Mentel Bible of 1466; it follows a text written some 150 years earlier (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 433). It was the first printed Bible in any vernacular language, and was taken from a Nuremberg Bible from the 1300s. Note a typical comparison, showing the affinity of the German 1350 and 1466 Bibles (which also match today’s pure German Bible). Pure Bibles worldwide have changed little throughout time.

Daniel 5:5

Cranc (1350)

der selbin stunde irschenen vingir als einis

Mentel (1466)

der selben stund erschinen vinger als einer

The Mentel Bible, printed by Johann Mentelin, contained 1 John 5:7, as do dozens of pre-Luther German Bibles. (See Maynard's *A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7*, p. 64; see p. 57 for a picture of this verse in the 1350 German Bible, *Augsburger Biblehandschrift*.) The Mentel Bible was followed by thirteen High German Bibles *before Luther's Septembertestament*. It is an error to pretend Luther gave the Bible to the German people (Pelikan, Jarosla, *The Reformation of the Bible The Bible of the Reformation*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966, p. 131).

“Recent researches however have shown that the elements of Luther’s style are already present in a large measure in the manuscript literature of the fourteenth and especially the fifteenth centuries” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 434).

Today there are over 800 manuscripts available of the German Bible used between 1300 and 1500. Imagine how many more Erasmus had access to. He would have had the Eggestein of 1470, the Pflanzmann of 1475, the Sensenschmidt and Frisner of 1476, the Zainer of 1476/77, the Sorg of 1477/80, the Delft Bible of 1477, the Quentell Cologne Bible of 1478/79, the Kölner of 1478, Schutken’s Bible of 1480, the Cologne Low German Bible of 1482, which “circulated widely in the Netherlands,” the de Grünigen of 1485, the *Biblia Germanica* published in 1483 in Nuremberg by Anton Koberger, the Schönsperger and Malermi Bibles of 1490, and the Low German Bible from Lübeck, done in 1492/94 (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 434).

In nearby Bohemia there were Bibles from as early as A.D. 860, leading to an edition in the 1400’s by John Hus.

“A Czech (or “Bohemian”) Bible translation existed long before the printing press or the Reformation” (*The Reformation of the Bible*, p. 151).

PRE-ERASMUS: **DUTCH** BIBLE (A.D. 1100-1500)

- As a young Dutchman, Erasmus' teachers "taught him to read and write Dutch" (Durant, pp. 271, 291). He had access to vernacular editions of the scriptures in his native Dutch. He would have studied the Dutch *Liège Diatessaron*, whose text dates from A.D. 1250. It is still extant today and "It is considered significant for the textual criticism of the New Testament" because it "varies so much from the Vulgate...." [corrupt new version readings]. It "shows a large number of peculiar readings which are held to derive from the **lost Old Latin original**" (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 429; See also D. Plooiif, *The Liège Diatessaron*, 1929-38, pp. 80-81).
- Erasmus had Jacob van Maerlant's *Rijmbijble* of A.D. 1271. Its author was persecuted because he "made the Bible available in the Dutch tongue" (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 431).



Erasmus knew the readings in the West Flemish book of **Revelation** from A.D. 1280. As the reader has seen, he had volumes of resources to determine the last verses of the book of Revelation. Critics of his choices here expose their lack of familiarity with the readings in the standard Bibles which framed the backbone and sinew of European and British culture and civilization.

Today the last six verses of Revelation are identical in the KJV and the Dutch *Bijbel* of 1618 (*Staten-Generaal der Verenigde Nederlanden*). It says, "het boek des levens" in Rev. 22:19, just as the KJV's, "the book of life." The *Bijbel* even cross references this verse to the "book" of Rev. 13:8 and 17:8. This *Bijbel* is still in print and is used by the true Christians in Holland. The French *Olivetian* also has, "book" of life (*livre di vie*). The "tree" of life is incorrect in the TNIV, NIV, HCSB, NASB and others.

CRITIC William Combs *pretends*, that “the last six verses of **Revelation**” contain “errors” in the KJV. He blindly claims, “They have no Greek manuscript support whatsoever” (William Combs, *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, “Erasmus and the Textus Receptus,” Spring 1996, p. 47). The KJV’s “book” of life is in Greek Manuscripts 051, 296, 2049, 2067 mg, as well as in the ancient Coptic and Arabic Bibles. Herman Hoskier, the pre-eminent collator of the manuscripts of Revelation, said Erasmus did *not* take this reading from the Latin, but from Greek Manuscript 2049 or 141. It is also in Andreas manuscripts. Combs assertions dissolve when one looks in any critical apparatus. (Please check: von Soden, Tischendorf’s 8th edition, Nestle-Aland 26th edition, Alford, United Bible Societies, Metzger’s Textual Commentary, Hoskier: Revelation, Charles: Revelation. (See Hoskier’s *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*. If the reader cannot access the cited critical editions, J. Moorman’s book, *When the KJV Departs from the [false] Majority Text of Hodges-Farstad*, contains this and much additional information. It is available from A.V. Publications.)

Contrary to Combs’ footnoted list of KJV errors:

- The word “and” is *in* Rev. 22:16 in MSS 296 and 2066 and 17 of Hoskier’s Greek cursives.
- The second “and” is also *in* Rev. 22:17 in Greek MSS 209, 218, 254, 296, 1894, 2049, 2050, 2066, 2075, 2321, as well as in the ancient Syriac, Coptic, Arminian, and Arabic Bibles.
- In Rev. 22:18 “for” is *in* Greek MS 2066 and 8 of Hoskier’s cursives, as well as the ancient Coptic and Ethiopic Bibles.
- “[A]nd *from* the things which are written in this book” is *in* Rev. 22:19 in Greek MS 296, 2049 and the ancient Arabic Bible.
- Finally, “you” is *in* Rev. 22:21 in Greek manuscript 296, 2050, 2066, and 15 of Hoskier’s cursives, as well as in the ancient Ethiopic Bible.

Erasmus had, in hand, generations of pure Dutch Bibles.

- In the early 1300s, the Gospels were circulating in Southern Dutch also. “Between 1359 and 1390 an anonymous translator rendered [*Historiebijbel*] a large number of books of both testaments, into Southern Dutch” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 429, 431).
- Gerard Groote, who founded the Brethren of the Common Life, the group who educated Erasmus in his early years, prepared a *Book of Hours*, a Dutch translation of many books of the Bible. Groote and his followers were “filled with the true apostolic spirit” and set about “to perfect themselves in the knowledge of the Scriptures, to copy and spread to others the truths of the Bible...” (Mangan, p. 8).
- Erasmus had the Dutch translation of the entire New Testament and Psalms by Johan Schutkenin 1383.
- Erasmus had the Delft Bible of 1477; it “circulated widely in the Netherlands.”
- None of the aforementioned Bibles were of the corrupt Latin Vulgate variety, hence, “opposition to vernacular bibles was still very strong...” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 434).

It is from Erasmus’ own Dutch Bible and those used by true Christians in the surrounding Low countries, that Erasmus had learned just *what* the Bible said and why the Latin Vulgate readings (seen in today’s new versions) are in error. At the University of Louvain, Erasmus “frequently stayed on account of its rich library,” affording access to scores of Bibles (Mangan, p. 120). The land of the Dutch is a stone’s throw from England, less than 100 miles across the English Channel. The KJV translators would have been familiar with these ‘persecuted’ Dutch vernacular Bibles, as would their ‘fellowservants’ in Europe, who intermingled freely with the Reformers from this area, and gave us the French, Italian and Spanish Bibles of the Reformation.

PRE-ERASMUS: FRENCH BIBLES

(A.D. 1100-1500)

Erasmus had moved to Paris to attend graduate college in his late twenties. According to Durant, he learned to speak French there and would have seen and examined the French vernacular versions (Durant, pp. 272, 291; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 35). According to the *Cabinet des Manuscrits*, Vol. III, as early as 1388, the University of Paris had 33 complete Bibles, 18 copies of the Old Testament Pentateuch, 15 historical books about the Bible, 28 editions of the Psalms, 24 Books of the Prophets, 42 Gospels, 15 of Paul's epistles, and 38 other copies of the Epistles, Acts, and Revelation. When Erasmus attended the University of Paris 100 years later, this number would have been greatly increased.

“French speaking families on both sides of the Channel had a great and growing familiarity with Scripture in their mother tongue during the centuries before Wyclif [pre-1300s]” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 448).

In the 1100s, “The Apocalypse (Revelation) had an immense appeal, and there were numerous translations” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 442). Erasmus would have seen these Old French versions of the book of Revelation. They were not from the Vulgate and would have corroborated his word choices when he printed his Greek New Testament.

Jacques LeLong states that even in the editions of 1170 and 1180, the French Bible follows the readings of the Christian Waldensians, not the Catholic edition. (*Bibliotheca Sacra*. Tom. I, p. 313 as cited in Nolan, xviii, note 1 et al.. See: Nolan, Frederick, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text*, London: Rivington, 1815 for one of the very best histories of the transmission of the Greek Received Text underlying the KJV.)

- In 1199 evil Pope Innocent III ordered a commission of Inquiry (the Inquisition) to investigate reports of “Gospels, epistles” in Old French. Lambert the Stammerer, one of the

suspects, defended himself, saying that a Flemish version already existed. (For good measure, he translated the book of Acts while in jail.)

Today there are six remaining copies of the 1180 edition of the French Provençal (Romaunt) version of the Bible. This language was spoken in the south of Europe between the 9th and 14th centuries. It carried forward the pure old *Itala Bible of the Waldenses* (Willaim Gilly, *The Romaunt version of the Gospel according to John*, London, 1848; *Waldensian Researches*, London, 1831; Wylie, James, *History of the Waldenses*, London: Cassell and Co., n.d.). The *Oxford Companion to the Bible* reports that,

“In Provence, the followers of Peter Waldo (d. 1217), who claimed the scriptures as their sole rule of life and faith, translated the Psalms and other books of the Old Testament and the complete New Testament into Provençal by the early thirteenth century. Pope Innocent III attempted to suppress the movement, but their influence was felt not only in France but also in the Netherlands and Germany and in Italy” (Bruce Metzger, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 756).

The French *Biblia historiale* (1291-1295) of Guyart des Moulins, expanded from Comestor’s *Historia scholastica*, “incorporated versions of many biblical books.” Erasmus would have seen this “medieval biblical encyclopedia,” as well as the Provençal Bible (Metzger, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, pp. 756, 757).

Erasmus would have also had the De Thou Bible of 1280, which contained most of the books, including the book of Revelation. *The Cambridge History of the Bible* states that “The Psalter and the Apocalypse represent an archaic [ancient] stratum” (vol. 2, p. 446). The French Bible of Gareth Des Malawians from 1297 also contains the book of Revelation, as did the French Decoy Bible (vol. 2, p. 449, et al.).

- Erasmus would have seen the French Bible of Raoul de Presles of 1380, the Bible of Jean II from the 1400s and the Bouillon Bible of 1410 (which has been held by the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland).

The French translation of 1333 by Jean de Vignay, who translated both the Gospels and the epistles for the Queen of France, would be well known to Erasmus.

- The French Old Testament was readily available in editions by Metz, Raoul de Presles, and Beauneveus, from between 1100 and 1300. The French Acre Bible of 1250 and the Sanford Bible of the late 1200s would have been available also. The Marzarine Library at Paris has Kings and Chronicles from the 1100s.
- The *Bible abrégée* and *Biblie historiale* were produced between 1291 and the 1400s and would have provided a resource for Erasmus.

These vernacular Bibles of France were generally not the Vulgate variety and commend the readings seen in Erasmus Greek text, the KJV and the Reformation French Olivetan (See Nolan, pp. xvii, xviii, xix).

The Preface to the corrupt Catholic *Rheims Douai New Testament* (1582-1610?) admits that in the 1400s, the French king, Charles V, was anxious to “shake out of the deceived people’s hands, the false heretical translations of a sect called Waldenses.”

This Catholic *Rheims Douai* Preface also admits that Bibles “**were extant in English even before** the troubles that **Wicleffe** and his followers raised in our Church, as appeareth, as well by some peeces **yet remaining...**” (*Rheims Douai New Testament*, Preface (1582-1610) orig. spelling digitized Chadwyck-Healey, 1997, p. 3).

PRE-ERASMUS: SPANISH BIBLES

(A.D. 1200-1500)

Spanish writers have traced the beginnings of their church to visits by the apostles James and Paul. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, Irenaeus and Tertullian refer to the Christians in Spain as, “truly subject to Christ.”

“Teofilo Ayuso Marazuela contends that *a priori* one should expect to find an **Old Latin** [non-Vulgate] version which originated in Spain. His thorough examination of 256 Spanish codices seems to corroborate this preliminary judgment. His findings may be summarized as follows: From the earliest **apostolic times** there existed in Spain a Latin version of the Bible...The *Vetus Latina* texts [pure]...continued to be used in Spain concurrently with the Vulgate [corrupt Catholic] until the XI century...Under Arab rule...those Christians who lived under the Crescent, had preserved their ancient biblical text of the **Visigothic origin**” (Teofilo Ayuso Marazuela, *La Vetus Latina Hispana: Prolegomenos, Introduccion general, estudio y analisis de las fuentes*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior di Investigaciones Cientificas, 1953, 321b) A. van den Born, “Santiago el Mayor,” *Diccionario de la Biblia*, Col. 1797; Serafin de Ausejo, “Pablo: IIG, Viaje a Espana,” *Diccionario de la Biblia*, Cols. 1395-7; Sebastian Bartina, “España en la Biblia: 8, San Pablo en Espana,” *Enciclopedia de la Biblia*, III, cols. 167-8. Jorge Augusto González, *Valera's Method for Revising The Old Testament in the Spanish Bible of 1602*, Atlanta, GA: Emory University (Dissertation), 1967, pp. 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 25 et al. [His use of Kittel is in error]).

In the Preface to the Spanish Bible of 1602, **Valera** states that in the first centuries after Christ, many rulers of Spain encouraged the use of the scriptures. He writes,

“[G]ood [Roman] Emperor **Theodotian II** [A.D. 401-450], of Spanish descent, whom with his own hand (since books were not printed, but written by hand then) wrote the entire New Testament, and had by custom to

read it every morning, with the Empress Eudocia, his wife, who was also well-versed in Holy Scripture...”

“Of **Emperor Charlemagne** is read that he spent a lot of time reading holy Scripture. The King of our Spain named **Receswinth** (A.D. 649-672)...would ask all kinds of deep questions as to what was needed in order to be saved...The same author [Illescas] said that **Alonso I**...would diligently acquire...portions of holy Scripture...He would save them, I say, so that they would not get lost, and so that the faithful would take advantage of them...”

“Our good **King Reccared** (A.D. 586-601), well studied in the reading of holy Scripture, wisely convinced many Arian ministers with reason rather than with his royal authority) to convert to the true religion of Christianity. I would beg God that our King and other kings...would imitate the example of these godly emperors and kings who are true Christians, reading holy Scripture, meditating and praying” (*Sagrada Biblia, “Exortacion Al Christiano Lector...,” Cipriano de Valera, En Amsterdam, En Casa de Lorenzo Iacobi, 1602, n.p., 6th page top left; translated by Carlos Donate, on file).*

Emory University scholar, Jorge González, states that King Alfonso X (1221-1284) ordered “the sacred books of the Bible to be translated into the language of Castille [Spanish]. From this it has frequently been inferred that the first Spanish Bible version was produced under royal patronage. But there is reason to suppose the existence of earlier versions. The decrees of the councils of Tolosa and Tarragona which prohibit the Bible in vernacular would so indicate.” Jose Llamas,’ thorough study of medieval Romance Bibles, documents, “A Bible of the Pre-Alfonsine period which included both testaments” (González pp. 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 25 et. al).

The Spanish Old Testament was non-Vulgate, and was “a direct heir of the ancient Spanish Bibles used by the Jews of the Peninsula” (González, p. 16). Between the 3rd and 8th centuries, migrating Jews brought their Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts to Spain. In fact, in 1250 true Spanish Christians used the Hebrew Old Testament, and would not use the Vulgate. Valera (1602) even states in his preface, “We have also eliminated that which was added from the 70 interpreters (Septuagint), or from the Vulgate, and which is not to be found in the Hebrew text.” Of interest to Erasmus and the KJV translators were Old Testaments, such as:

- The text of David Kimchi (1232).
- The Bible which Alfonso X (reigned 1252-1284), translated from the vernacular French into Spanish about 1280, which was based in part on pre-Alfonsian editions.
- The text of Rabbi Moses Arragel in the *La Biblia De La Casa De Alba*. It gives the Hebrew *almah* (*virgen*) in reference to Isa. 7:14, matching the KJV, virgin. The note in *La Biblia de Valera* (1602) says “*Almah en heb.*”
- The text (e.g. 1417) of what came to be called the *Biblia de Ferrara*. It did not follow the Mariological interpretation of the Vulgate in Genesis 3:15 (“she shall bruise thy head”).
- The Sephardie Jewish *Pentateuco* (1497).
- The Complutensian Polyglot of Ximenex de Cisneros.

The true Christians of Spain also had a non-Vulgate New Testament.

“Samuel Berger points to certain similarities between the Peiresc manuscript [a Spanish Bible of the 1400s] and the Marmoutier New Testament,...and in turn earlier French and Provençal versions” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 467).

This is evident because the Catholic Councils of Tarragona (1233) and Toulouse (1229) demanded that Christians “hand over to ecclesiastical authorities all bibles in *romancio*.” (*Romancio* is the language of the common man and of the Bible of the northern Italians (Gaul), France, and Spain, as opposed to the Latin of the Catholic church. The *Oxford English Dictionary* relays, ‘*unum romance boke, is callyd ye gospels*’) (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 473; *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edition, vol. XIV, p. 61).

When the Inquisition was established in 1478 at Castile, “Catalan and Spanish Bibles...became its concern. The disappearance of the Valencian Bible of 1478 is the best proof that it was dangerous to own any such book” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 474). The Bibles stolen from their owners during the Inquisition, “lie hidden in manuscripts scattered in many different libraries, awaiting those who will study...” them. Erasmus did just that in the libraries of robber Rome (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 474, 491). Erasmus’ books and influence spread to Spain, as discussed in “*Erasme et l’Espagne*” (Marcel Bataillon, 1937). The Spanish Inquisition listed as forbidden, “books by Erasmus” and Spanish Bibles printed in Geneva (González, pp. 12, 28-29, 141).

Later Spanish translations that paralleled Erasmus Greek New Testament, and not the corrupt Vulgate, include Enzinas (Greek Chair at Cambridge), Pineda, Reina, and Valera. “It could be shown that their own translation owed much to the earlier tradition in the vulgar tongue” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, p. 491). “[I]n Valera’s version we have one which harkens back to several centuries of Bible versions in Spain. Through the Ferrara Bible it would derive from the ancient Jewish Bibles which circulated in the Peninsula and which preserved a tradition independent from those of the rest of [Catholic] Europe” (González, p. 116).

The similarity of the Spanish language to Latin and Italian would have enabled Erasmus to determine what true Spanish Christians believed to be the Bible (e.g. *Jesu Christi, Gesu Cristo, Jesuchristo*). Spanish scholars on the KJV committee likewise examined the Spanish Bible.



The NAMES, which are associated with all of the Bibles which have been mentioned, are not indicative of *different translations*, but of the *different men* who printed, distributed, owned, or were associated with duplicating and proliferating the Bible.

Nothing new was created by the Reformation Bibles in the French Bibles of Lefèvre d'Étaples, Olivetan, Diodati, the Czech Kralice Bible, printed on a “secret press,” the Danish Bibles of Pedersen and of Christian III, the Spanish Reina-Valera, the Portuguese Almeida, the German Luther Bibles, the Dutch translations of 1523/24 by Pelt and some anonymous translators, the States-General of 1636, the Slavonic Bible of 1653, the Arminian Bible of 1666 (which the Catholics admit “were translated by Chrysostom” in the 300s), Gutbier’s Syriac of 1633, and the Georgian Bible of 1743. They simply *printed* the Bible which had been in use since the respective language originated (*The Reformation of the Bible*, p. 151 et al.; *Rheims Douai*, Preface, p. 3).

The BIBLES that have been mentioned in this chapter would have added mortar to the Greek building blocks of **Erasmus’** Greek New Testament. Since he was the world’s leading literary figure at that time, no doubt he knew of scores more.

“He was for ever on the wing, searching libraries, visiting learned men...[H]e was no stationary scholar confined to desk or closet. He was out in the world, traveling from city to city, gathering material among all places and all persons...**In all literary history there is no more extraordinary figure**” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 219).

Erasmus would not have had the respect that he did, from the finest scholars in the world, had he not had intimate knowledge of the Bibles listed herein. The vernacular Bibles in use **before** the time of Erasmus' printed Greek edition and the KJV, in the main, read *just* as the KJV does in unjustly disputed passages, such as I John 5:7 and Acts 8:37_(see Maynard).

Because some of today's seminary deans and professors think research is 'surfing' (and **snoring**) between the History and Discovery channels on TV, posed for their coffins in their recliners, they can not imagine a man, whose love for the word of God sent him traversing Europe, feeling every bump on the road in heat and cold, and scouring libraries by candlelight. For those wishing to pursue further detailed study into the history of the true Bible from its inception to the present, the book, *The History of the Debate Over I John 5:7* by Michael Maynard is available from AV Publications. Maynard (p. 69) cites Sebastian Brant, who in 1494 stated in his book *Narrenschiff*,

“*A*ll the lands
are now filled
with the sacred Scriptures.”

When Erasmus printed his Greek New Testament, all the world was “filled” with the word of God. He could have printed no other text. Examination of the text ‘received’ by the aggregate body of Christ throughout **time** (continuity) and by *various language groups*, determined the text when questions arose for Erasmus and the KJV translators. (This can be difficult to do today, but God made such materials available to those who needed them. English-speaking translators today can simply use the pure preserved King James Bible when translating the Bible into other languages. Lexicons are not an option. Let Erasmus and other Christian men explain why.

Because the KJV is a precise and contextual accurate translation, thousands of foreign language translations were subsequently made directly *from it*. In the 1800s the *then* conservative American Bible Society was not ‘Greek-only.’ It insisted that new foreign Bibles be translated *from the KJV*, not from any Greek or Hebrew texts. (Although there were pure Greek and Hebrew texts available, they knew that lexicons were secularized and devoid of contextual interpretations, which were readily available in the KJV. The KJV is a lexicon, showing the perfect God-honored English translation of each word **in each context**.)

“It maintained that it would not publish or distribute any bibles that did not ‘conform in the principle of their translation, to the common English version.’ This emphasis on the common English version (King James Version) as the root translation from which translators had to work raised the issue of this version’s accuracy to another level. The American Bible Society was tying its translators to an English translation of the Scriptures...” (Paul Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States 1777-1880*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp. 106, 107 et al.).

Recognizing the danger in the current lexicons and their lack of precise contextual applications, the American Bible Society rejected Adroniram Judson’s 1834 Burmese translation because it rested solely on *his* translation from *a* Greek printed edition, without reference to the KJV.

Sectarian influences [“Unitarian,” “Mormon,” etc.] “maintained that the American Bible Society was encouraging the production and distribution of error-filled texts in ignoring the primacy of the originals” (Gutjahr, p. 106, see chapter 3). The

Christ-denying Unitarians saw a wide open door in the use of the so-called “original text,” instead of the KJV (See Gutjahr, ch. 3 for details.) Stanford Professor Gutjahr states that the emphasis on “the originals” and “its inspired penmen” was a “thinly veiled” ploy to permit private and even sectarian interpretation. The wide variety of men-authored lexicons meant that *anyone* could ascribe just about *any* meaning to *any* word. (See Riplinger, *The Language of the King James Bible*, p. 72 et al.). Just as today, often,

“The issue was not whether the words were there; the issue was what the words meant” (Gutjahr, p. 107).

In protest, the sectarians broke away and formed the liberal American and Foreign Bible Society; their founder was soon joined by arch-heretic and ASV chairman, “Philip Schaff.” The American and Foreign Bible Society and its sectarian members, “resolved at the first meeting of its Board of Managers that all missionaries of the board engaged in translation work...‘study, to ascertain the exact meaning of the **original** text’...with numerous philological **sources** [lexicons]” (Gutjahr, pp. 107-108).

Erasmus writes of a similar situation,

“Now you can imagine what happiness is theirs while they form and re-form the Sacred Scriptures at their own behest, just as you would mould wax...” (Mangan, p. 300).

Erasmus wrote extensively about the fallacy of defining words based on lexicons. “[U]nless this particular form could be discovered in a glossary [lexicon],” skeptics find fault with a translation. Erasmus wisely objected to translating using the lexicon’s “pagan terms for Christian truths” (Bainton, p. 205).

“But Erasmus was not so sure that those who used pagan words were not thinking pagan thoughts” (Bainton, p. 209).

Are Turks who have Christian Bibles which call God, *Allah*, able to divorce themselves from all of their previous notions about the false moon god, *Allah*? (Exod. 23:13). (It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for Lucifer (pronounced, hay-lale') sounds exactly like the Arabic word for 'crescent moon,' the symbol for the god of Islam.) The unlearned may not have these associations; many others will. Bainton points out:

“When Christianity takes over a new culture shall it invest indigenous words with Christian connotations or introduce foreign words into the native tongue?...[I]ndigenous [terms] may retain their former connotations” (Bainton, p. 209).

Erasmus said that using lexicons would allow the following translation (Bainton, p. 208).

Christian translation:

“Jesus Christ, Word and Son of the eternal Father, came into the world according to the prophets and was made man. Of his own will he gave himself to death to redeem his church...”

Pagan translation

“The Interpreter and Son of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, savior and king according to the responses of the augurs, came down from Olympus to earth, assumed human shape and voluntarily consigned himself to the shades for the welfare of the republic” (Bainton, p. 208).

Erasmus attributed much Bible corruption to Origen and the use of his citations and those of other Greek writers, stating,

“...My chief fear is that with the revival of **Greek** literature [e.g. lexicon citations of Greek writers such as Origen, Plato, etc.] there may be a revival of paganism. There are Christians who are Christians only in name...[T]he study of **Hebrew** may lead to Judaism, which would be

worse still. I wish there would be an end of scholastic subtleties...” (p. xxi; see Nolan, pp. 414-415 for Erasmus’ Latin; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 187.)

During the reigns of Protestant monarchs in England (e.g. Edward VI), books which cited the pagan Greeks or had citations of “scholars in them, they cast out of all college libraries and private studies.” Such citations form the backbone of modern Greek lexicons (*Bibliomania*, p. 24, note).

Erasmus was a man before his time. Semantics, that is, the meaning of words in a culture, was *the very topic* of the book, *New Age Bible Versions*. Bainton said, Erasmus forewarned five-hundred years ago, that if lexicons cited pagan definitions, strong words like “church” would become “assembly” and “heresy would be faction” (Bainton, p. 205). Surprise! Surprise! New versions have done it. The new versions make the following ‘politically correct’ change in 1 Cor. 11:19:

KJV	NKJV	NASB	ESV	HCSB
heresies	factions	factions	factions	factions

As Erasmus warned, secularized lexicons allow the new versions (i.e. Acts 7:38, 45, Heb. 4:8) to erase the pre-incarnate Christ and his pre-figured church from the Old Testament.

KJV
“church in the wilderness...Jesus”

TNIV
“assembly in the desert...Joshua”

(The latest *Oxford English Dictionary*, reflecting our current pagan culture, now defines ‘love’ in a very sensuous, unbiblical way. Aren’t you glad the KJV does not substitute ‘love’ for ‘charity,’ as do all of the new versions?)

Location...Location...location. Real estate brokers are often heard repeating the fact that a place's character and value are reflections of its *location*. The same 3000 square foot 'space,' hidden on a Tennessee mountain top or centered on Time Square, must be translated into two different styles of architecture. The KJV translators were highly skilled at building Bible words to match the surrounding skyline. Erasmus denounced Bible teaching and exegesis done by taking words out of their contexts.

“[I]t is common usage of the theologians to stretch their heaven, that is, Sacred Scripture, like a skin...[T]he words of Sacred Scripture...**in their own place are in complete accord**...[Y]oung divines accommodate to their own usage four or five words torn out here and there, and even, if need be, deliberately corrupted, [ignoring] **what precedes and what follows in the text**...” (Mangan, p. 308).

The Bible's built-in definitions are in complete “accord” with a word's context. Bible teachers unwisely *search* for a ‘synonym’ or definition of a KJV word, in concordances, which list the numerous ways individual Greek and Hebrew words have been translated into English (e.g. George V. Wigram, *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament* et al.). Ignoring the finely woven fabric of the scriptures, they rip words from their contexts and proclaim, ‘That Greek word was translated *elsewhere* as...’ A word's context circumscribes the limits of its meaning and application. For instance, the Hebrew *pesilim*, which describes ‘stone cutting,’ is translated “graven images,” when the context identifies it with false “gods.” But it is translated “quarries,” when it describes a geographic *location* (e.g. Judges 3:19). The Hebrews, who had a Bible with the same word (*pesilim*) in both places, knew the difference. They were *there*; we are not. *We need* a translation that is contextually sensitive.

ERASMUS & INSPIRATION:

NOT ^{DEGREES}
KNEES

Although Erasmus printed the Greek New Testament, he believed that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, speaks directly and simply, through vernacular Bibles. Erasmus' words bear repeating:

“**H**eresy does not arise among the laity who have the **scriptures in the vernacular**, but among the doctors” (Bainton, p. 203).

He had left his theological studies at the French Sorbonne for this reason. Erasmus states,

“**T**HE **Spirit** teaches, not Aristotle; grace, not reasoning; **inspiration**, not the syllogism” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. III, p. 82).

“**A**DVISED divines to leave scholastic subtleties and study Scriptures...I wish there could be an end of scholastic subtleties, or, if not an end, that they could be thrust into a second place, and Christ be taught **plainly** and **simply**. The **reading of the Bible**...will have this effect. Doctrines are taught now which have no affinity with Christ and only **darken our eyes**” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 356, 187).

Erasmus said God speaks to babes, not bookworms.

“He upbraided the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the Doctors of the Law, while he sedulously protected the unlearned

multitude. For what else does, ‘Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees’ mean but ‘Woe to you wise ones’? But he seems to have been wonderfully delighted with children, women, and fishermen...” (Mangan, p. 310).

Erasmus said that in **vernacular** editions of “the gospels and the epistles” **Christ is “more genuinely present** than were we to view him with the eyes of flesh” (Hajo and Annemarie Holborn, eds., *Enchiridion, Paraclesis, Ratto*, in *Ausgewählte Werke*, München, 1933, pp. 146-149; parts cited in Bainton, p. 140).

The belief among Christians that vernacular Bibles are truly God’s words, not man’s words, has always been the rule, not the exception. Even today, Dr. James Sightler writes,

“Nowhere does the Bible say that inspiration was limited to Greek or Hebrew alone” (Dr. James Sightler, *Lively Oracles*, Greenville, SC: Sightler Publications, 2002, p. 1).

Even *The Columbia Encyclopedia* states that the English scriptures were first given to Caedmon (c. 600) “by divine inspiration...Linguistic evidence proves that they are not of Caedmon’s region...” (Compilers of the *Encyclopedia* may not personally believe it, yet they are recording what *has been believed* throughout history; 2nd edition, s.v. Caedmon). Bede (c. 600s) writes that, “the sublime gift was bestowed upon him by inspiration...” Vernacular Bibles have always been metrical. So strikingly so, that Caedmon, “did not learn the art of poetry from man, but from God,” adds Bede. Caedmon wrote, “in English [Saxon], which was his native language. By his verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world and to aspire to heaven” (Merryweather, p. 180).

The British Museum still has the 312 page manuscript that many believe is the Saxon Bible of Caedmon. If it is not his very manuscript, its notes, which are by Bede in Saxon, prove that it was done at the same time (Cottonian Collection, Claudius, B. iv; Merryweather, p. 181).

The Preface of Erasmus' Greek New Testament states,

“**I** WOULD have the weakest woman read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul...I would have those **words translated into all languages**, so that not only Scots and Irishmen, but Turks and Saracens might read them. I long for the plowboy to sing them to himself as he follows the plow, the weaver to hum them to the tune of his shuttle, the traveler to beguile with them the dullness of his journey...Other studies we may regret having undertaken, but happy is the man upon whom death comes when he is engaged in these. **These sacred words give you the very image of Christ speaking, healing, dying, rising again, and make him so present, that were he before your very eyes you would not more truly see him**”
(Durant, p. 285).

Erasmus calls for “the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11),

“**D**o not assume that you are a great doctor of whose wisdom the people should not be deprived. Just see what you have at home and bring that to the Lord. He will bless it and give it back to you to distribute. The people will then receive more benefit than if some superstitious Pharisee, some arrogant philosopher, some eloquent orator should come with a carefully prepared discourse...If some pompous doctor comes announcing that he has more to deliver than time will permit and mysteries to expound which will be over the heads of his audience, they will go away hungry. Just bring the two little fishes. Bring them to Jesus. Nothing which **he has not touched** will be of any avail” (Bainton, p. 144).



God used Erasmus to print the purified Greek, Latin (and even Dutch) New Testaments. His *own writings* reveal the kind of Christian God entrusted with his holy word. Let Erasmus speak for himself, pleads Froude,

“Whenever possible, let us not be told *about* this man or that. Let us hear the man himself speak...[L]et us be left to form our own opinions about him” (Froude, *Short Studies*, p. 36).

Yale University professor of church history, Dr. Roland H. Bainton said of Erasmus in his book *Erasmus of Christendom*, “[H]e was a Christian man.” Bainton called Erasmus an “Anabaptist,” one of the terms used in that period to describe true Christians. Erasmus said, “In innocence of life they excel all others” (Bainton, pp. 227, 261).

Froude said, “He had no vices.” “His dream was a return to early Christianity, as it was before councils had laid the minds of men in chains; a Christianity of practice, not of opinion...[H]e had merely tried to recall men to the original fountain of the faith” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 57, 206, 235). Erasmus writes, “Would that men were content to let Christ rule by the laws of the Gospel...” (Smith, *Preserved*, *The Age of the Reformation*, NY: Henry Holt, 1920, p. 58). “The Pietists also found much to their liking in the devotional writings of Erasmus.” (Bainton, p. 279). Quotes from Erasmus will reveal why millions worldwide have been so uplifted by his writings. He wrote:

“As to me, all I have sought has been to open my contemporaries’ eyes and bring them back from ritual to true Christianity...Read the Gospels...and see how we have degenerated...A man of piety would feel that he could not employ his time better than in bringing little ones to Christ...We must forget ourselves, and think first of Christ’s glory...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 260, 356, 118, 349).

“**H**E who with full face fixes his eyes upon Christ crucified and fears to crucify him afresh, when he considers how much he suffered for us, who was without blemish, will surely bear with greater patience the afflictions of this life. Who would be so inhuman and ungrateful as not to love in turn him who first loved him and by such benefits prompted to a life of love?” (Bainton, p. 268).

Bainton gives Erasmus’ description of a Christian:

“**H**IS confidence is solely in the Lord Jesus who takes away his sins nailing them to the cross, ‘Far be it from me,’ says he, ‘that I should come armed with merits and briefs to summon my Lord to enter into judgment with his servant, certain as I am that in his sight no man living shall be justified!’” (Bainton, p. 215).

One is baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit, and not by Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, or Episcopalian *water* baptism. Erasmus wrote about this baptism into Christ by the Spirit. He did not believe in infant baptism (*Erasmus’ Paraphrases of the New Testament*). “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” I Cor. 12:13.

“... **O**UR hope lies in God who freely gives us all things through his Son Jesus, by whose death we are redeemed, into whose body we are implanted by baptism, that we should be dead to the lusts of the world and live according to his teachings and example, bearing adversity with patience and looking for the recompense of the reward, undoubtedly in store for all the godly at Christ’s coming, and that we should ever progress from virtue to virtue, ascribing nothing to ourselves but whatever is good in us to God” (Bainton, p. 186; *Erasmii Epistolae*, P.S. Allen, vol. V, 1039, p. 118).

“**G**OD...is far more clement to sinful man, if only he repents and despises himself...” Bainton said Erasmus believed, “[A] godly man...has no interest in [Catholic] indulgences. His confidence is solely in the Lord Jesus who takes away his sins nailing them to the cross.” Erasmus said, “Let us give up the cult of wailing unless it be for our sins...” (Bainton, pp. 147, 215, 236).

“**W**E are assured of victory over death, victory over the flesh, victory over the world and Satan. Christ promises us remission of sins, fruits in this life a hundred-fold, and thereafter life eternal. And for what reason? For the sake of our merit? No indeed, but through the grace of faith which is in Christ Jesus. We are the more secure because he is first our doctor. He first overcame the lapse of Adam, nailed our sins to the cross, sealed our redemption with his blood, which has been confirmed by the testimonies of the prophets, apostles, martyrs...and by the universal church of the saints. He added the seal of the Spirit lest we should waver in our confidence...What could we little worms do of ourselves? Christ is our justification. Christ is our victory, Christ is our hope and security. ‘Unto us a child is born.’ Unto *us*, born for us, given for us. He it is who...for us suffers hunger and thirst, is afflicted, endures the agonies of death, sweats blood, for us is conquered, wounded, dead and resurrected, and sits at the right hand of God the Father” (Bainton, p. 269).

“**W**HO in all history, is like to Jesus, ineffable, inconceivably God of God, before all times, eternal and fully equal to his eternal and loftiest parent? Does not his human birth easily overshadow that of all kings? By the will of the Father and the breath of the Spirit he was born of a virgin, a man in time and still God, unsullied by our corruption. Who is richer than he who gives all things and is not diminished? Who more illustrious as the splendor of the glory of the Father, enlightening every man that comes into the world?”

“WHO more powerful than he to whom the Father has given power in heaven and on earth? Who more mighty by whose nod the universe was established? at whose nod the sea is calm...diseases flee, armed men fall on their faces, devils are expelled, rocks rent, the dead raised, sinners repent, and all things are made new? Who is more august whom angels adore and before whom devils tremble? Who more invincible than he who has conquered death and cast down Satan from heaven? who more triumphant than he who has harrowed hell and brought souls to heaven where he sits at the right hand of God the Father? Who is more wise than he who founded and governs the universe in harmony?”

“WHOSE authority is greater than his of whom the Father said, “This is my beloved Son. Hear ye him.”? Who is more to be feared than he who can cast body and soul into hell? Who is more ancient than he who has no beginning and will have no end? But perhaps boys may better think of him as a boy, lying in swaddling clothes in a manger, while angels sang, shepherds adored, the animals knew him, the star stood over where he lay, Herod trembled, Simeon embraced, Hanna prophesied. O humble simplicity! O sublime humility! How can thoughts conceive or words suffice to express his greatness? Better to adore than to seek to explain. What then shall we do, if John the Baptist said he was unworthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes? Strive, my dear boys, to sit at the feet of Jesus...” (Bainton, p. 102).

“You talk of the great name which I shall leave behind me, and which posterity is to never let die. Very kind and friendly on your part; but I care nothing for fame and nothing for posterity. I desire only to go home and to find favour with Christ” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 417).

RASMUS WRITES: ♦ ABOUT ROME

Although Erasmus' early years had been hemmed in and hovered over by haunting, hooded Catholic monks, he spent his adult life writing and protesting their false doctrines. Erasmus' two most widely read books, *The Praise of Folly* and *Enchiridion*, were mainly unbridled mockeries of the activities of the Catholic church. Naturally, the Catholic church despised the writings of Erasmus. In 1559 Pope Paul IV "placed everything Erasmus had ever written on *The Index*" of forbidden books (Bainton, pp. 277-278).

During that period, Sebastian Frank published a world history, including an alphabetical list of heretics in the eyes of the Roman church. "Under the letter **E**" was the name "Erasmus" (Bainton, p. 257). "[T]he Council of Trent condemned Erasmus' translation," because it matched that of the true Christians, and did not match their corrupt Vulgate translation (Durant, p. 285).

"[H]e was branded as an impious heretic, and his works were forbidden to Catholic readers" (Durant, p. 437). "In Spain...the monks of the Inquisition began a systematic scrutiny of Erasmus' works, with a view to having him condemned as a heretic (1527)" (Durant, p. 435). (Current Catholic, Calvinistic and liberal scholars sometimes pretend he was a friend of the Catholic religion. If their fables were true, why would the Catholic church itself and the scholars of the day consider him an enemy of that religion?)

Read Erasmus' anti-Roman views from the following samples of his own writings. (Having been likewise trapped and trained in the Catholic religion, *until* I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour in my late twenties, this author sadly can attest to this systems' *continuing* heresies and whoredoms and the precious Catholic people it hides from Christ.)



RASMUS WRITES ABOUT:

❖ PRIESTS, MONKS, & POPES

What did this “ex-monk,” Erasmus, write about the Reformation?

“...until we are rid of the Roman See and its satellites the Dominicans, Carmelites, and Franciscans, and I don’t see how that can be attempted without grave tumult...” (Allen, P.S., *Erasmii Epistolae* III, Oxford, 1906-58, vol. III, p. 609 or qtd. in Bainton, p. 159).

“You think I am responsible. The source lies in the immorality of the priests, the superciliousness of the theologians, the tyranny of the monks...[A]re not these enough to provoke tumult?” (Bainton, p. 204).

“The shamelessness of the Roman Curia has reached its climax” (Durant, p. 18).

“He had employed all his resources of wit and satire against the priests and monks...” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, New York, 1910, vol. 9, p. 730). Of them Erasmus said, “What fungus could be more stupid?” (Froude, *Short Studies*, p. 73). In Erasmus’ *De Conscribendis Epistolis*, he told of his disagreement with the Catholic church’s view that priests and nuns should not marry. “[A]s for celibacy, it was of late introduction,” according to Erasmus (Bainton, p. 181). He felt it had to do with the church’s ‘income.’ Because of this, many convents of men and women differ little from “public brothels” (“*publicis lupanaribus*” Froude, *Life and Letters*, p. 352).

Froude writes,

“The Dominicans at once recognized Erasmus as their most dangerous enemy”
(Froude, *Short Subjects*, p. 83).

Erasmus wrote of what he called these, “hooded whoremasters the monks, vile rascals as they are.”

“**T**he stupid monks say mass as a cobbler makes a shoe; they come to the altar reeking from their filthy pleasures. Confession with the monks is a cloak to steal the people’s money, to rob girls of their virtue, and commit crimes too horrible to name!”

“...Beware!...beware how you offend the monks. You have to do with an enemy that cannot be slain; an order never dies, and they will not rest till they have destroyed you...”

“But observe that the monks and the friars be allowed no voice; with these gentlemen the world has borne too long. They care only for their own vanity, their own stomachs, their own power; and they believe if the people are enlightened, their kingdom cannot stand.” (Froude, *Short Subjects*, pp. 87, 88, 86; see also *The Life and Letters*, p. 59).

“I knew a noble woman who gave a large sum to a priest to have masses said for her soul at Rome. Her money might better have been spent to obligate the priest *never* to go to Rome...The way to enter paradise is the way of the penitent thief” (Bainton, p. 270).

In *Moria*, Erasmus writes,

“They pretend to resemble the Apostles, and they are filthy, ignorant, impudent vagabonds...[T]hey quarrel with each other and curse each other. They pretend to poverty, but they steal into honest men’s houses and pollute them, and wasps as they are, no one dares refuse them admittance for fear of their stings.”

“They hold the secrets of every family through the confessional, and when they are drunk, or wish to amuse their company, they let them out to the world. If any wretched man dares to imitate them, they pay him off from the pulpits, and they never stop their barking till you fling them a piece of meat” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 132).

Erasmus wrote dozens of personal letters to men around the world, exposing the vices of the Catholic hierarchy of his day. (The news media expose their vices today.)

“The aim of the monks is not to benefit men’s souls but to gather harvests out of their purses, learn their secrets, rule their houses...The religious orders nowadays care only for money and sensuality...The tables of priests and divines run with wine and echo with drunken noise and scurrilous jest...” (Froude, *Life and Letters*, pp. 351, 235, 236).

“The reports of the state of morals at Rome have caused vast numbers of men to dislike and even abhor it...” (p. 268).

“The corruption of the church, the degeneracy of the Holy See are universally admitted...” (p. 184).

“Priests who are loose in their lives and yet demand to be honored as superior beings have brought their order into contempt...[T]he monks have trusted to their wealth and numbers, to crush those whom they can no longer deceive...They are now scarcely thought honest men...[T]he Catholics, instead of repenting of their sins, pile superstition on superstition...” (pp. 364-365).

ERASMUS writes,

“I am but a sheep;
but a sheep may bleat
when the Gospel is being destroyed.

Theologians, Schoolmen, and monks fancy that in what they are doing they strengthen the church. They are mistaken” (p. 374).

“I trust, at any rate, that there will be no bloodshed, that the victory will be to Christ’s honour, and that we shall not have papal officials and monks in power again. The clergy are thinking only of revenge, and not the least of amending their lives” (p. 374).

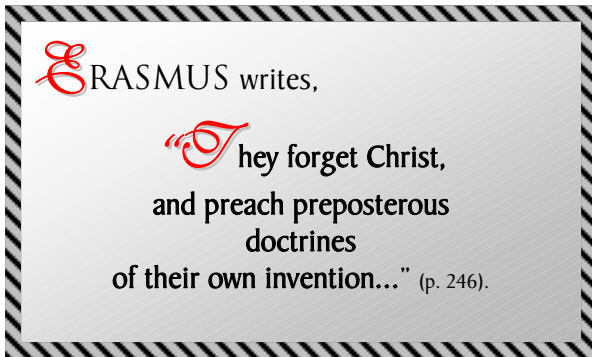
“They know that the whole storm has risen from the pride and self-indulgence of the ecclesiastical order, yet they go on spending, feasting, gambling night after night. The people see it all, yet the clergy think that the revolt can be crushed by force. The only

remedy is for the heads of the church to mend their ways, but this is the last thing in their thoughts...It is to defy God Almighty. The world cannot overcome the world. They blow their trumpet and say, they are making war on heresy. The war will be only for their own revenues and power and idle pleasures.” (pp. 391, 392).

“They ought to be preaching the Gospel; you find them instead haunting princes’ courts and rich men’s houses...” (p. 401).

“Those wretches in the disguise of poverty are the tyrants of the Christian world...” (p. 183).

“Behind the monks are crafty influential men who have the Pope’s ear and urge him into dangerous courses...” (p. 248).



“There might still be hope if the Pope trusted in Christ. Alas! He trusts more in his cardinals and...in those wicked monks whose depravity has caused the whole disturbance” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 351, 235, 236, 268, 184, 364, 365, 374, 391, 392, 401, 374, 246, 248, 183).

Froude states, “[H]e [Erasmus] mentions, on his own personal knowledge, several specially distinguishing features of monastic life. Part of a monk’s duties was to read aloud...[I]n the intervals, the reader would introduce licentious anecdotes of adventures in brothels. Others would baptize and hear confessions when they were drunk...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 353).

Erasmus wrote further,

“**I TOLD** parsons to leave their wranglings and **read the Bible**; because I told the popes and cardinals to look at the Apostles, and make themselves more like them. If this is to be their enemy, then indeed I have injured them...You bishops, cease to be corrupt: you popes and cardinals, reform your wicked courts: you monks, leave your scandalous lives...” (Froude, *Short Subjects*, pp. 134, 123).

Erasmus wrote of a “young man” who,

“...has disgraced himself by accepting a cardinal’s hat and becoming a Pope’s monk...[W]hat a fate for a human soul!...Princes, popes, Turks combine to make the world miserable. Christ grows obsolete, and is going the way of Moses” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 226).



ERASMUS WRITES: ♦ ABOUT POPES

What did Erasmus think of popes? His dislike for them is expressed most directly in *Julius Exclusus*, a work which Thomas More lists as the product of Erasmus (Allen, P.S., *The Age of Erasmus*, Oxford, 1914, pp. 185-189). In it Erasmus calls the papacy, “the synagogue of Satan.” He describes “Pope Julius Excluded from Heaven” at his death. 🖋️

In Erasmus' dialogue, he speaks *through the apostle Peter*, challenging the Pope. Erasmus writes:

“Peter: Have you won souls by holiness to Christ?

Spirit: He has sent plenty to hell...

Peter: Tell me again, what have you done for the church?

Pope Julius: I found the Church poor, I made her splendid with regal palaces...

Spirit: And glamorous prostitutes and obsequious pimps...

Pope Julius: See the loftiest princes kissing the blessed feet of the pope...

Peter: Paul did not speak of the...princes he had slaughtered...He spoke of shipwreck, chains, dangers and plots...You consider it flourishing when drunk with debauchery...

Peter: You pretend to be a Christian...

Pope Julius: ...They talk of simony, and blasphemy, sodomy, poisoning, witchcraft, in language expressing abomination of such actions.

Peter: I do not wish to be personal, but can it be that such crimes are to be found among yourselves...?

Pope Julius: The barbarians have vices of their own...[W]e tolerate ours and abominate theirs...They say Rome is no See of Christ, but a sink of the devil...[W]e are rich and this commands a certain deference; and there is a superstitious impression that it is unlucky to quarrel with priests. We have ceremonials which impose upon the vulgar. We give the princes grand titles, call one Catholic, another Serene Highness, another Augustus, and all of them our Beloved Sons. They in turn call us Holy Father, and now and then kiss our foot. We send them consecrated roses, cups, and swords, and Bulls confirming the rights to their crown. They make us presents of soldiers, money, and now and

then a boy or two. So it goes on — as the Proverb says, ‘Mule scratches mule’...

Peter: Poor worldly madman— ...These are Satan’s arts...Christ has sovereign power, but he has sovereign goodness, sovereign wisdom, sovereign simplicity. Power with you is joined with madness and vanity. If Satan needed a vicar, he could find none fitter than you. What sign have you ever shown of an apostle?...The church is a community of Christians with Christ’s Spirit in them. You have been a subverter of the church.

Pope Julius: The Church consists of cathedrals, and priests, and the court of Rome, and I myself at the head of it.

Peter: Christ is our Head, and we are his ministers. Are there two heads?...

Pope Julius: Behold all, myself, Supreme Pontiff, borne on soldiers’ shoulders in a golden chair, and waving my hand majestically to adoring crowds...

Peter: I look at a very worldly tyrant, an enemy of Christ and a disgrace to the Church.

Pope Julius: You would not say so had you seen me carried in state at Bologna and at Rome...Those were spectacles. Carriages and horses...lovely boys,...pomp of bishops, glory of cardinals...and I carried aloft, the head and author of it all! Scipio and Caesar were nothing by the side of me.

Peter: Enough, enough, most valorous boaster. Those heathen were human compared to you...many thousand Christians had been slain for your ambition; you...who never did good to any single soul in a word or a deed...Him who spent himself that He might save all; you who have spread desolation through the world for the sake of your own single pestilent self!

Pope Julius: Mere envy!

Peter: Insolent wretch! Dare you compare your glory with mine?— and mine was Christ’s and not my own...I gained thousands of souls for Christ: you have destroyed as many thousand. I healed the sick, cast out devils, restored the dead to life, and brought a blessing with me where I went. What blessings have you and your triumphs brought? I

used my power for the good of all: you have used yours to crush and vex mankind.

Pope Julius: You have not told the whole. You have left out of your list poverty, vigils, toils, prisons, chains, blows, and the cross to end with.

Peter: You do well to remind me. I glory in those sufferings more than miracles. It was in them Christ bade us rejoice, and called us blessed. Paul...talked of shipwrecks, bonds, disgrace, stripes. These were apostolic triumphs; these were the glories of a Christian general. When he boasted, it was of the souls whom he had recovered from Satan, not of his piles of ducats. For us even the wicked had good words, while you, every tongue of man has been taught to curse.

Pope Julius: All this is news to me.

Peter: Very likely. With your treaties and your protocols...you had no time to read the Gospels. The disciple of Christ will not work on a mind absorbed in this world. Our Master did not come from heaven to teach an easy philosophy. To be a Christian is no idle profession. To be a Christian is to be careless of pleasure, to tread riches under foot as dirt, and count life as nothing. And because the rule is hard, men turn to empty forms and ceremonies, and create a spurious body of Christ for a spurious head.

Pope Julius: Do you mean to say I am to give up money, dominion, revenues, pleasures, life? Will you leave me to misery?

Peter: Yes, if you count Christ as miserable. He who was Lord of all became the scorn of all, endured poverty, endured labour, fasting, and hunger, and ended with a death of shame.

Pope Julius: Very admirable, no doubt. But he will not find many imitators in these times of ours.

Peter: ...Christ takes nothing good from any man. He takes what is falsely called good, to give him instead, of eternal truth, as soon as he is purged from the taint of this world.

Being himself heavenly, he will have his church like him, estranged from the world's corruption, and those who are sunk in pollution can not resemble one who is sitting in heaven. Once for all, fling away your imagined wealth, and receive instead what is far better.

Pope Julius: What, I beseech you?

Peter:...Christ himself. The more a man is afflicted in the world the greater his joy in Christ, the poorer in the world, the richer in Christ, the more cast down in the world the more exalted in Christ. Christ will have his followers pure, and most of all his ministers...The higher in rank they are the more like Christ they are bound to be, and the less entangled in earthly pleasures. Yet you...who make yourself equal with Christ, think only of money...to say nothing of vicious pleasures, and you abuse his name to support your own vanities. You claim the honour due to Christ, while you are Christ's enemy. You bless others, you are yourself accursed. You pretend to have the keys of heaven, and you are yourself shut out from it...If the world saw the gifts of Christ in you, saw you holy, learned, charitable, virtuous, it would think more, not less of you for being poor. If Christians had no care for riches, or pleasure, or empire, if they were not afraid of death, then the church would flourish again. It withers now because Christians have ceased to exist except in name. Did you never reflect...how the church began in this world, how it grew, how it strengthened itself? —not by war, not by horses, not by gold ingots; but by suffering, by the blood of martyrs, my own among the rest, by imprisonments and stripes...You call the church flourishing when it is drunk with luxury, and tranquil when it can enjoy its wealth and its pleasant vices with none to reprove...

Pope Julius: I have heard this sort of thing before.

Peter: Did you ever hear it in your preachers' sermons?

Pope Julius: I have never heard anything in their sermons but my own praises...They say I was a real god, the saviour of mankind, and such like.

Peter: No wonder none was found to speak the truth to you. Salt you were without savour, and a fool besides.

Pope Julius: Then you won't open the gates?

Peter: ...We are not of your communion in this place...I can say no more to this monster...

Julius, refused admittance, says that when more of his soldiers arrive he will knock down the gates of heaven”
(Bainton, pp. 106, 108; Durant, pp. 279-281; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 149-168).



RASMUS WRITES ABOUT:

◆ VIRGIN & SAINT CULTS

Erasmus bemoans, ‘How men pile up images and candles before the Virgin and think she will help them...while to Christ they do not turn!’ In his colloquy, *The Pilgrimage*, “The Virgin thanks him for his attack upon her cult...” This book also “derides the inanities attendant upon the cult of the saints.” Of images he wrote, “[I]t might be well if bishops in an orderly fashion should remove them all except the cross...What could be more revolting than the cult of relics?” (Bainton, pp. 214, 213, 268, 244).

Bainton said of Erasmus’ works, written as late as 1524, (i.e. *Rash Vows* and *The Shipwreck*), “[H]is satire was so disparaging that others might well be induced to give up the pilgrimages, the cult of the saints, indulgences, monastic vows and habits, and even the very sacraments, in favor of an interior piety” (Bainton, p. 181). Erasmus said of the Catholic’s own holy days, “...as for holy days...we find none of them in the New Testament” (*Lugduni Batavoru*, Leiden, 1703, vol. IX, 1197-1214 B, Easter 1522). Erasmus’ essay, *Fish Diet*, mocks the Roman church’s mandate to eat fish on Friday. Of Erasmus’ collected *Colloquies*, an English translator deemed, “no book fitter to read which does, in so delightful and instructing a manner, utterly overthrow all the Popish Opinions and Superstitions” and show the “shocking contrasts between the Christianity of the [Roman] Church and the Christianity of Christ” (Durant, p. 282).

Froude said, books such as the Erasmus' *Adagia* were only a "preliminary specimen" of his rancor for the Catholic church.

"[I]n his later writings, the Christian religion appears to have been superseded by a system which differed only in name from the paganism of the old world. The saints had taken the place of the gods. Their biographies were full of lies, and as childish and absurd as the old theologians. The Gospels were out of sight. Instead of praying to Christ, the faithful were taught to pray to miracle-working images and relics. The Virgin, multiplied into a thousand personalities — our Lady of Loretto, our Lady of Saragossa, our Lady of Walsingham, and as many more as there were shrines devoted to her — was at once Queen of heaven and local goddess."

"Pious pilgrimages and indulgences had taken the place of moral duty. The service of God was the repeating of masses by priests, who sold them for so much a dozen. In the exuberance of their power the clergy seemed to exult in showing contempt of God and man by the licentiousness of their lives and the indolence of their dominion. They ruled with their self-made laws over body and soul...The spiritual food provided in schools or parish church was some preposterous legend or childish superstition, varied with the unintelligible speculations of scholastic theology. An army of friars...watching through the confessional the secret thoughts of man and woman...abused the women's confidence for the vilest purposes..." (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 65, 66, 67).

From Spain a Christian writes to Erasmus,

“They hate you, but do not you be disturbed. You have torn the masks from their faces, and shown them to the world as they are...They know that if your writings are read there will be an end of them. But their abuse does not hurt you. We love you the better for it. A Spanish translation of the ‘colloquies’ is in the hands of every man and woman” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 344).

His *Adagia* was translated into English, French, Italian, German, and Dutch during his lifetime (Durant, p. 274). Erasmus could not go to Catholic regions, saying, “[I]f I go there the Catholics will fall upon me” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 354, 396).


RASMUS WRITES: ➡

AN ANTI-CATHOLIC ‘STUDY BIBLE’

Erasmus added numerous notes to his Greek New Testament. It was “garnished with notes and commentaries as stinging as Luther’s own.” Most notes exposed the crimes of the “Catholic Church...whose awful countenance was now practically revealed for the first time for many centuries.” Froude says further, “They were deliberate accusations attached to the sacred text, where the religion which was taught by Christ and the Apostles and the degenerate superstition which had taken its place could be contrasted side by side. Nothing was spared; ritual and ceremony, dogmatic theology, philosophy, and personal character were tried...” Erasmus’ explanatory notes, *Annotations in Novum Testamentum*, were finally printed separately (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 286, 126, 127, et al.). Froude writes of Erasmus,

“To his edition of the New Testament he had attached remarks appropriate to the time, and sent them floating with it throughout the world, which must have made the hair of the orthodox divines stand on end, ‘like quills upon the fretful porcupine’...”

“Erasmus opens with a complaint of the neglect of Scripture, of a priesthood who thought more of offertory plates than of parchments, and more of gold than books; of the degradation of spiritual life, and of the vain observances and scandalous practices of the orders specially called religious” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 120, 121).

bserve Erasmus’ notes for the following verses in his Greek New Testament:

◆♦MATTHEW 19:12

“Eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.”

“Men are threatened or tempted into vows of celibacy. They can have license to go with harlots, but they must not marry wives. They may keep concubines and remain priests. If they take wives they are thrown into the flames” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 121).

◆ MATTHEW 23 (regarding the scribes and Pharisees)

“You may find a Bishop here and there who teaches the Gospel, though life and teaching have small agreement. But what shall I say of those who destroy the Gospel itself, make laws at their will, tyrannize over the laity, and measure right and wrong with rules constructed by themselves? Of those who entangle their flocks in the meshes of crafty canons, who sit not in the seat of the Gospel, but in the seat of Caiaphas and Simon Mangus — prelates of evil, who bring disgrace...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 121).

◆ MATTHEW 23:27

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”

“...the avarice of priests and the hypocrisy of monks playing on the credulity of the people. Even Bishops play their parts in these fantastic shows...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 122).

◆ MATTHEW 24: 23

“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.”

“I saw with my own eyes Pope Julius II at Bologna, and afterwards at Rome, marching at the head of a triumphal procession as if he were Pompey or Caesar...Peter subdued the world with faith...if they had Peter’s spirit...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 122).

◆ I CORINTHIANS 14:19

“Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

“They chant nowadays in our churches in what is an unknown tongue [Latin, Hebrew etc.]...while you will not hear a sermon once in six months telling people to amend their lives. **Modern church music is so constructed that the congregation cannot hear one distinct word.** The choristers themselves do not understand what they are singing, yet according to priests and monks it constitutes the whole of religion.”

“Why will they not listen to Paul?...Words were then pronounced plainly. Words nowadays mean nothing. They are mere sounds striking upon the ear, and men are to leave their work and go to church to listen to **worse noises than were ever heard in Greek and Roman theatre.**”

“Money must be raised to train boys to squeal...[T]he laity are burdened to support miserable, poisonous corybantes, when poor, starving creatures might be fed at the cost of them...[A] set of creatures who ought to be lamenting their sins fancy they can please God by gurgling in their throats. Boys are kept in the English Benedictine colleges solely and simply to sing morning hymns to the Virgin.”

“If they want music let them sing Psalms like rational beings...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 122, 123).

◆ EPHESIANS 5:4

“Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.”

“Monks and priests have a detestable trick of burlesquing Scripture. When they wish to be specially malicious, they take...*Thou God* and introduce infamous words into them, making themselves as hateful when they would be witty as when they are serious...”
(Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 123 et al.).

◆ 1 TIMOTHY 1:6

“From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling.”

“[C]an a Pope...make a decree which contradicts the Gospel?...[I]s he quasi-God...[C]ompared with Christ, the best of men are but worms” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 124, 125).

◆ 1 TIMOTHY 3:2

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife...”

“[H]omicide, parricide, incest, piracy, sodomy, sacrilege, these can be got over, but marriage is fatal. There are priests now in vast numbers, enormous herds of them, seculars and regulars, and it is notorious that very few of them are chaste. The great proportion fall into lust and incest, and open porfligacy. It would surely be better if those who cannot contain should be allowed lawful wives of their own, and so escape this foul and miserable pollution...[S]uch of our modern clergy as keep themselves out of mischief do it more from fear of the law than from conscience. They dread losing their benefices or missing their promotions” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 126).

Froude said, not surprisingly,

“Ignatius Loyola [founder of the notorious Jesuit Order] once looked into Erasmus’s New Testament, read a little, and could not go on. He said it checked his devotional emotions. Very likely it did.” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 122).

HOW can the myriad of KJV critics write about Erasmus pretending, that,

“He was a lifelong, devoted Catholic” (Kutilek, Douglas, *Erasmus: His Greek Text and His Theology*, Hatfield, PA: IBRI, 1995, p. 16).

Bainton said Erasmus was “Rejected by the Catholics as subversive” (Bainton, p. vii.). KJV critics, such as Doug Kutilek, Dan Corner, and James White do not cite any primary sources in their discussion of Erasmus; all of their quotes are little snippets, taken second or third hand out of their original contexts. Apparently these critics have never read the complete writings of Erasmus, either in Latin or in translation. (Kids! Do not complain when your mother, as mine did, sits you in a stuffy room with a private Latin tutor at the age of 13. God can use the oddest things for his glory!) Such critics have apparently not even read the entire writings of Bainton or Froude from which they pull quotes.

We will assume Erasmus’ detractors have not read widely on the life and writings of Erasmus (lest we surmise that they have a troubled relationship with the truth).



LUTHER, FREE WILL & NO SACRAMENTS

Of Erasmus, Bainton states, “He was entirely at one with Luther that salvation depends solely on grace...And as a matter of fact there was nothing in Luther’s program [on salvation] which he could not endorse...” (Bainton, pp. 165, 155). Erasmus “applauded Luther’s Thesis.” He sent copies of it to Colet and More, saying, “The Roman Curia has cast aside all shame. What is more impudent than these [Catholic] indulgences?” (Durant, p. 428). Erasmus wrote to another friend,

“**H**EAR that Luther is approved by all good men...I think his Thesis will please all, except a few about purgatory, which they who make their living from don’t want taken from them...I perceive that the monarchy of the Roman high priest (as that See now is) is the plague of Christendom, though it is praised through thick and thin by shameless preachers. Yet I hardly know whether it is expedient to touch this open sore, for that is the duty of princes; but I fear that they conspire with the pontiff for part of the spoils” (Durant, p. 428).

Erasmus wrote to Luther,

“**D**EAREST brother in Christ, your epistle, showing the keenness of your mind and breathing a Christian spirit, was most pleasant to me...[Y]ou have friends here too— me in particular...” (Durant, pp. 429, 430).

Erasmus would not attack Luther and wrote,

“THE WORLD has been besotted with ceremonies. Miserable monks have ruled all, entangling men’s consciences for their own benefit. Dogma has been heaped on dogma. The bishops have been tyrants, the Pope’s commissaries have been rascals. Luther has been an instrument of God’s displeasure, like Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar, or the Caesars, and I shall not attack him on such grounds as these” (Froude, *Short Studies*, p. 128).

When Erasmus was expelled from his professorship at Louvain for defending Luther, he moved to Cologne and there defended Luther in conference with Frederick of Saxony. “He encouraged the Elector, as we have seen, to protect Luther from the Pope” (Froude, *Short Subjects*, p. 120). Erasmus stated,

“LUTHER has taken up the cause of honesty and good sense against abominations which are no longer tolerable. His enemies are men under whose worthlessness the Christian world has groaned too long...May Christ direct Luther’s actions to God’s glory, and confound those who are seeking their own interest. In Luther’s enemies I perceive more of the spirit of the world than of the Spirit of God” (Froude, *Short Subjects*, p. 121; *The Life and Letters*, p. 259).

Erasmus then wrote *Axiomata Erasmi*, “to the effect that,”...“good men and lovers of the Gospel were those who had taken least offense at Luther; that the world was thirsting for evangelical truth (i.e. truth based solely on the Gospel); and that such a mood, so widely spread, could not be suppressed” (Durant, p. 430).

Erasmus wrote,

“**E** PERCEIVED that the better a man was, the less he was Luther’s enemy. The world was sick of teaching which gave it nothing but glosses [e.g. ‘That word in the originals has the sense...’] and formulas, and was thirsting after the water of life from the Gospels and the Epistles...A few persons only were clamoring at him in alarm for their own pockets...”

“[T]here are persons calling themselves bishops...whose moral character is abominable, can it be right to persecute a man of unblemished life, in whose writings distinguished and excellent persons have found so much to admire” (Durant, p. 431; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 270, 271).

Pope Leo published the bull, *Exsurge*, against Luther. Erasmus responded saying, “this bull is appalling”; Erasmus made every effort in England to thwart Pope Leo’s command to burn Luther’s books (Bainton, p. 160).

The next Pope, Adrian VI, who had gone to school years earlier with Erasmus, asked him to come to Rome. Erasmus replied, “You say, Come to Rome; you might as well say to the crab, Fly.” Froude recalls, “They offered him a bishopric if he would attack Luther. He only laughed at them” (Froude, *Short Subjects*, pp. 127, 125).

Erasmus wrote to Pope Adrian:

“**E**F you mean to try prison, lashes, confiscation, stake, and scaffold, you need no help from me...”

“FOR myself, I should say, discover the roots of the disease. Clean out those to begin with. Punish no one. Let what has taken place be regarded as a chastisement sent by Providence...[R]eform the abuses which are justly cried out against...” (Durant, p. 433; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 310-312).

Pope Adrian never responded. Erasmus tells a friend, “I wrote to Pope Adrian. I suppose it did not please him, for he took no notice of it...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 334). “To Adrian he may well have seemed a dangerous person — a renegade monk who had thrown up his profession, as Luther had done” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 307).

Erasmus wrote regarding Luther, to friends and dignitaries,

“The papal party have acted like fools. The whole affair has been mismanaged by a parcel of stupid monks. The Pope’s Bull directed them to preach against Luther, that is, to answer him out of Scripture. They have not answered him. They have only cursed him and lied about him...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 293).

“It is easy to call Luther a fungus; it is not easy to answer him...” (p. 296).

“None can deny that Luther had an excellent cause...Christ had almost disappeared... Christendom was being asphyxiated with formulas and human inventions...[N]othing was heard of but...the powers of the Pope...men who, like Demas, loved the life that now is. Men needed waking. The Gospel light had to be rekindled...” (p. 305).

“The defeat of Luther will destroy evangelical truth and Christian liberty...” (p. 318).

“They require me to revoke what I had said at first in Luther’s favor. A pretty condition! I was to lie against my own soul, make myself the hangman of a set of prostitute wretches...” (p. 329).

“[I] regarded Luther as a good man, raised up by Providence to correct the depravity of the age. Whence have all these troubles risen? From the audacious and open immorality of the priesthood, from the arrogance of the theologians and the tyranny of the monks...” (p. 332).

“The monks, instead of looking for a reign of Christ, want only to reign themselves. The theologians curse Luther, and in cursing him curse the truth delivered by Christ and the apostles...No fact is plainer than that this tempest has been sent from heaven by God’s anger...” (p. 350).

“Luther’s books were burnt when they ought to have been read and studied by earnest and serious persons...” (p. 375).

Contrary to all of the aforementioned facts, those who oppose the KJV, like Doug Kutilek, grab any straw to frame their twisted caricature of our English Bible. Kutilek gives his readers none of the true facts about Erasmus and pretends that Erasmus “disapproved of the doctrinal revolution initiated by Luther” (Kutilek, p. 1).

ERASMUS could *not* agree with *some* of the unbiblical ideas of Calvin and Luther, particularly, their idea that God **PRESELECTED** *which* “nine out of every ten souls were divinely predestined to everlasting hell” and **COULD NOT** receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour in this life (Durant p. 420). Erasmus believed the scripture that pleads, “whosoever will let him come...” Erasmus wrote *De libero arbitrio*, a mannerly treatise that proclaims the doctrine of ‘free will,’ that is, the doctrine that *denies* that man is a puppet and God a cruel tyrant who *makes* people sin and who would *forbid* a person to be saved.

Nor could Erasmus consent to Luther’s *toleration* of graven images and statues (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. III, p. 30). Erasmus also objected to the Reformers’ insistence on infant baptism and legal restraints against the Anabaptists; Although Erasmus wrote about “a convent of nuns, some of whom were possessed by evil spirits...,” he did not deem decent Calvin’s burning of witches (Durant, p. 424 et al.; Mangan, p. 347).

Erasmus could not conform to the Lutheran and Catholic view that the communion was the actual flesh of Christ. “He thought of the Eucharist as a symbol rather than a miracle...” just as the scriptures teach (Durant, pp. 288, 424). “His spiritualism inclined him to reject a physical presence.” Luther believed in con-substantiation, a modified Catholic view of the Lord’s supper. “Erasmus interpreted the bread, not as the Lord’s body but as the bread of the gospel” (Bainton, pp. 256, 144, 145). Erasmus said the ceremonies of the Catholic church savor more of Judaism than of Christianity. Bainton writes,

“*As* for the sacraments...in his eyes no rite of the Church, no external framework of the Church was necessary for salvation, which depends rather on a heartfelt piety...This was a position actually more radical [and scriptural!] than that of Luther,

and Melanchthon acutely observed that the views of Erasmus ‘with respect to the sacrament of the altar would have given rise to much graver tumults had not Luther arisen to channel the zeal of men in another direction’” (Bainton, p. 165).

It was for these scriptural reasons that Erasmus did not join the Lutherans. “I would be happy to be a martyr for Christ, but I cannot be a martyr for Luther” (Bainton, p. 167). Many were being killed for expressing beliefs such as Erasmus.’ His followers were being sent by the Catholics to the stake and by Protestants to the block.

When rumors circulated that Luther was dead, Albrecht Dürer, wrote in his diary, “O God if Luther is dead, who will so clearly teach us the gospel? O Erasmus of Rotterdam where are you staying? Ride forth you, knight of Christ. Defend the truth and win the martyr’s crown” (Bainton, p. 167). Dürer, a well-known reformer and artist, created the woodcut, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Dürer saw his friend Erasmus, as one who, as his woodcut depicts, would spiritually tread on the pope’s miter, which represents the authority the Pope has usurped. These reformers despised violence, as do all true Christians.





RASMUS MISREPRESENTED

Erasmus has been widely misrepresented by unsaved authors who have sought to discredit either Christianity, the Received Text, or the KJV. Exod. 20:16 warns,

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

Oxford historian J.A. Froude said in his lecture on “The Scientific Method Applied to History” —

“Historical facts are of two kinds: the veritable outward fact — whatever it was which took place in the order of things — and the account of it which has been brought down to us...” (Froude, *Short Studies*, vol. II, p. 567).

Erasmus says that *much* of what we read today is the latter, merely ‘opinion and tradition’ (Froude, *Short Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 1-38). Erasmus himself penned a jab “at scholars who throw a smog of annotations over the work of others” (Bainton, p. 94). Since Erasmus was one of the best known Christians in history, he has been the victim of what historian Isaac Disraeli called, “killing a man by lies” (Disraeli, Isaac, *Curiosities of Literature*, London: Routledge, 1863). The unsaved scholars cannot tolerate the fact that Erasmus, one of the greatest intellects of all time, was a Bible-believing, born-again Christian, who used the KJV text type. So they remold Erasmus to fit their own Catholic, Anglo-Catholic, Calvinistic, Platonic, or Humanistic mold. Erasmus himself forewarned that, “They will take Erasmus for one of themselves by-and-by” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 70). Such unsaved men do not have the spiritual discernment to ‘analyze’ the writings of a true Christian. They agree ‘to agree’ that Erasmus was anything but what he actually was.

“The concord of wolves is proverbial”
(Erasmus, *Complaint of Peace*, p. 721).

CRITICS of Erasmus call him a ‘Humanist.’ The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that the old academic meaning of the word ‘humanist,’ in the 1500s, was vastly different than its use and meaning today. The OED states that the term ‘humanist’ was used to describe,

“a classical scholar; esp. Latinist, a professor or teacher of Latin.”

Samuel Johnson’s 1863 *Dictionary of the English Language* defines a ‘humanist’ as, “A philologist; a grammarian.” Period. Johnson elsewhere defines a ‘philologist’ as a “one who studies language” (Johnson, Samuel, *The Dictionary of the English Language*, ed., Alexander Chalmers, London: Studio Editions, 1994 printing of 1843 edition).

The old classic, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, in their article on “Humanists,” quoted Erasmus as saying the highest object of the revival of studies “will be to become acquainted with simple and pure Christianity in the Bible.” This is in direct opposition to today’s secular humanist (Hastings, James, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, New York: Scribner’s, 1928, vol. 6, p. 832).

Erasmus wrote to a reformer concerning the unfortunate current state of the study of ‘theology’:

“But nowadays the good and the wise keep clear of it, and leave the field to the sordid, who think themselves omniscient...You are trying to bring back the Christianity of the Apostles, and clear away the thorns and briars with which it is overgrown...” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 48).

THE writings of Erasmus, which have come down to us, must be carefully evaluated in light of the following six facts: 🐼

BY TRANSLATORS

Erasmus wrote in Latin, and those who cannot read Latin are forced to see him through the dark prejudices of the men who translated his works. Translation is not a science. Most of his translators take his Latin words and give them a liberal slant. (Just like the new translations of the Bible!)

Does the Latin *agito* mean, 'to agitate,' 'to celebrate,' or 'to manage'. Does *liber* mean 'licentious' or 'unbiased'? Is *paganus* 'a heathen' or an 'unlearned,' or 'rustic' individual? Do we 'celebrate unbiased, rustic individuals?' Or do we 'agitate licentious heathens'? Two opposite views can be generated from one Latin (or Greek) original! The first is a liberal's translation; the second would be a conservative translation. Remember this the next time you hear someone say, "Erasmus said." Most Latin or Greek words have *many* English equivalents, with various connotative meanings.

Erasmus wrote much against the Ciceronian method of translation (using the pagans as a determiner of meaning). Sadly, his own works are being translated by that method today. What prejudices might be found in Erasmus' *The Handbook of the Militant Christian*, translated and edited (!) by John P. Dolan of the Jesuit stronghold, Notre Dame University? Perhaps Tyndale's translation of *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, would be more trustworthy. The Allens, via Oxford University Press, translated Erasmus' correspondence. The Royal Dutch Academy has translated the entire corpus. Today many are using the more easily accessible recent translations published by the liberal University of Toronto, who asked Bruce Metzger, the editor of the *corrupt* Greek UBS New Testament, to be the general editor! He declined, but became an advisory committee member (Metzger, *The Reminiscences*, p.164). Which translation would you trust?

To make matters worse, these translators do not work from photocopies of an original edition of Erasmus, but work from Latin ‘critical editions,’ like the highly dubious *Erasmi Opuscula*, edited by Wallace Ferguson (Hague, 1933).

Erasmus’ “In Praise of Folly” was translated into many languages. Of one translation a friend wrote, “Erasmus was very displeased with this translation, for he asserts in a letter to Lystrius that the translator made him say things of which he had never thought, that he had omitted much that he did not understand, and that he had badly rendered many passages. This translation did much harm to Erasmus” (Mangan, p. 319).



RASMUS MISREPRESENTED: 2

BY BIOGRAPHERS

After Erasmus’ Latin text has been critically *edited* by who-knows-who, and then *translated*, by who-knows-who, a *biographer* pokes and jabs at what remains until Erasmus is deflated to match the worms-eye view of his secular biographers. “[F]ew men have suffered so much from the rashness of their biographers...[M]any of them have imputed ideas and motives to him which have no foundation in any statement that he has left in his writings” (Mangan, p. 172).

“[B]iographers...resent, perhaps unconsciously, the sense that they stand on a lower level, and revenge their humiliation when they come to describe great men by attributing to them the motives which influence themselves [projection]”

“Unable to conceive, or unwilling to admit, that men of lofty character may have had other objects than are familiar to their personal experience, they delight to show

that the great were not great after all, but were very poor creatures, inferior...[T]hey have thus reduced history to the dung-heap of humiliating nonsense which a large part of it has unfortunately become” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 272-273).

Unfortunately *most* of the books and encyclopedia articles available to our generation, about Erasmus, allow their readers to catch only a glimpse of the true Erasmus through their lattice-work of lies. Even the 1899 standard, but sometimes deceptive work, *The Life and Letters of Erasmus*, by J.A. Froude, distorts his beliefs. Froude was an unbeliever, whose book, “Nemesis of Faith,” was so anti-Christian that it was “burnt.” Christians blamed Froude’s heresy on the evil influence of his brother, who “hated Protestantism...detested the reformers, admired the church of Rome” and began the movement to return the Church of England back to Catholicism (*Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. Froude, James, pp. 678-686 and Froude, Richard, pp. 730-731). J.A. Froude admits that he often wrote, not to present the facts of history, but to sway his reader to his point of view, using emotional prose.

“He [Froude]...compares the facts of history with the letters of the alphabet, which by selection and arrangement can be made to spell anything. He derided the claims of history to be treated as a science, and concerned himself exclusively with its dramatic aspect...Froude admits that the dramatic poet ‘is not bound, when it is inconvenient to what may be called the accidents of facts.’ In his *Siding at a Railway Station*...he imagines himself...undergoing an examination on his life’s work; the judges use a magic fluid, which deletes all that is untrue in his books, and page after page, chapter after chapter, disappear, leaving only a statement **here and there**...” (*Dictionary*, p. 686).

Those few true ‘here and there’ statements are seen in the book you are now reading. [Quotes were checked by referring to several other biographies, translations, and editions]. Critics of Erasmus and the KJV pick out and print the remaining pieces of Froude’s fables. The trustworthy *Dictionary of National Biography* wrote of “the carelessness with which Froude not infrequently used his authorities.”

“Froude was charged with misrepresenting the views of many persons...He was accused of misreading his documents and even manipulating them in order to justify his preconceived ideas...Of Froude’s editorial methods, Prof. Norton says, ‘Almost every letter [in one book]...which I have collated with the original is incorrectly printed, some of them grossly so’...*The Life and Letters of Erasmus*, which was translated into Dutch (2 Vol. 1896, 1897) was as bitterly attacked as anything Froude wrote, the main accusation being that he seriously garbled Erasmus’s **letters** and **misrepresented** his meaning (cf. *Quarterly Review*, January, 1895; *Dictionary*, pp. 679-687).

Erasmus’ “misrepresented” letters are used today by Erasmus’ critics. Froude’s father, who knew him best, said that his son “was little better than a common swindler.” Froude’s biographer, Lytton Strachey, writes that Froude’s work was seen as “a mass of inaccuracies” by one of Oxford’s greatest history professors, Edward Freeman. He also states that Froude’s eyes were actually “red”! (Lytton Strachey, *Biographical Essays*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Pub., n.d., pp. 257-263). Froude even admits, “I have...compressed the flow of Erasmus’s eloquence, and have omitted some parts of it. One of these omissions contains what is perhaps, the most curious passage in the whole letter” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 238).

The second most widely quoted biography of Erasmus is by neo-Platonist and modern humanist, Roland Bainton. Erasmus' other biographies are by Catholic sympathizers, John Magnost and Will Durant. The latter candidly admits,

“The reader should be warned that I was brought up as a fervent Catholic, and that I retain grateful memories of the devoted secular priests, and learned Jesuits...” (Durant, p. viii).

To compound the problem, Durant and Bainton took much of their research from Froude, Johannes Janssen (a Catholic historian), and the rationalist Preserved Smith. I have used these works with extreme caution, finding grave discrepancies and contradictions in all of them.

For instance, Froude quotes Erasmus as writing to Luther, “You have friends here too— **one** in particular” (who is it?). Durant quotes Erasmus as saying, “You have friends here too— **me** in particular” (Erasmus considered Luther his friend!). The difference between ‘me’ and ‘one’ is critical to an understanding of the friendship between Erasmus and Luther. This friendship was denied by critics of Erasmus (Durant, p. 430; Froude, *Life and Letters*, p. 234).

Erasmus' writings foresaw biographers such as these.

“There is not a martyr, there is not a virgin, whose biographies have not been disfigured by these monstrous absurdities...One might fancy they were invented by knaves or unbelievers to destroy the credibility of Christianity itself” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 301).

Martyr John Huss wrote that his personal letters were also, “evil-favouredly translated” (Foxe, vol. 3, p. 500). A friend of Erasmus wrote to him bemoaning the fact that Erasmus was being misrepresented already:

“Here are you, in a condition which would break the spirit of a vigorous youth, still bringing out book on book, for the instruction and admiration of the world. What matter the attacks upon you? No great writer ever escaped malignity...Thus it has been with them as with you, and heretics can quote passages from the Fathers which seem to make for their view; but so they can quote Apostles and Evangelists and even Christ Himself” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 405).



RASMUS MISREPRESENTED: 3

BY ENEMIES OF THE KJV

After Erasmus has been pressed of his every passion by Catholic and liberal biographers, the anti-KJV pamphleteers draw their poison pens from hell's deep wells, citing misquotes or evil surmisings from Froude, Durant, or liberal encyclopedias. They then jab at little quotes, until the life has left them entirely. It is as if these authors care nothing about praying 'knees', or even real 'degrees', but only about 'fees' and 'royalties.' Reading the writings of James White, Robert Morey, Dan Corner, and Doug Kutilek, one would think that Erasmus was a Luther-hating, ignorant, unsaved, Catholic buffoon. (*It may have something to do with ignoring, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge," then getting a degree from a mail-order college. The book *Name It and Frame It* calls the school where James White got a degree, a "degree mill, period"; see the 1995, 4th edition, p. 141).

Even the Dean of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, William Combs, pretends that Erasmus was an "illegitimate" child, even though Erasmus himself writes otherwise. J.A. Froude admits it is a "lie" told by "enemies"... "who liked to throw a slur" upon him (Combs, p. 36; Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 2, 3). Erasmus himself wrote of men, such as these who, "would rather be notorious by doing

harm than live quietly and not be noticed.” He tells us, “Nothing pleases them like blackening another man’s good name...They care not for the disgrace to themselves so long as they can injure me” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 50, 217, 281).

Typical of much of the misinformation about Erasmus is a small booklet by Dan Corner. His references and footnotes indicate that he has never read the original writings of Erasmus. Corner’s booklet, done in the vein of a high school term paper, cites a few encyclopedias. With a forked-tongue he spoon-feeds his readers sop such as, ‘Erasmus had “a limited number of MSS, rather haphazardly consulted.” He cites as his reference the *New Catholic Encyclopedia!* Although the Catholics like to claim the *person* of Erasmus as their own, they despise his books and Greek New Testament, which show the errors in their own Latin Vulgate and Greek *Vaticanus* manuscript. Corner’s only other references about Erasmus includes a book entitled, *Erasmus: A Critical Biography*. The author admits his prejudice in the title. To twist Erasmus’ beliefs, Corner adds words. Notice how he changes the meaning by adding bracketed words:

XCorner erringly writes,

“He told Luther, “I always freely submit my judgment to the decisions of the [Roman Catholic] Church...”” (Dan Corner, *A Critique...* Washington, PA: p. 5).

Elsewhere Corner mentions Bainton’s book, *Erasmus of Christendom*, but apparently did *not* read it, because Bainton said Erasmus defined ‘the Church,’ not as the ‘Roman Catholic’ church, but as the true Christian church.

Quoting directly from the letters of Erasmus, Bainton states,

“What is the Church?...‘Christian people throughout the whole world...the hidden society...No individual can be identified as a member, but we are to believe that there is

such a society on earth which Christ united by his spirit...” (Bainton, pp. 193-194).

Corner, again quoting from *A Critical Biography*, tries to lead his readers to believe that Erasmus thought, “Mary is Diana and Jesus is Jupiter!” (Corner, p. 11). Actually Erasmus said nothing of the kind. Erasmus wrote (in his treatise against Ciceronian Latin) protesting against the use of pagan terms by Christians. Bainton states (cited earlier),

“But Erasmus was not so sure that those who use pagan terms were not thinking pagan thoughts...the Father would have to be called Jupiter...the Virgin...Diana” (Bainton, pp. 209, 205).

Erasmus' book, *The Pilgrimage*, is an unbridled mockery of anyone who would be involved in the “cult of the Virgin.” Corner pretends over and over that Erasmus believed exactly *the opposite* of what he really believed.

X Corner pretends, that Erasmus was “very favorable to Catholicism,”

“...in 1524, at the solicitation of the Romish party, he [Erasmus] published his opposition to the Reformer “...[Luther] by issuing a treatise against his doctrine of the will...” This last sentence is significant, for it shows that Erasmus was still very favorable to Catholicism two years after he formulated the edition of the *Textus Receptus* which was used for the KJV!” (Corner, p. 9).

Erasmus was *never* very favorable toward Catholicism!; His only agreement with them is that man has a free will. He joins almost all Christians in believing that ‘whosoever will’ may come to Jesus Christ. (Corner himself believes in free will and he is not a Catholic. But Corner takes his Arminianism so far that he believes that salvation is lost with *every* sin!)

Luther and Calvin believed the false teaching that God chooses some to go to hell; according to them, these can *never* receive Christ as their Saviour in this life. The term 'Reformed' is embraced by those who still hold this unscriptural belief; it is a euphemism used to put a pretty name on an ugly teaching. The theology of those who today call themselves 'Reformed' has more in common with Catholicism than Christianity (e.g. infant baptism, Augustinian theology, and state churches, with their harsh treatment of Baptists and Evangelicals, etc.).

✘ Corner pulls a quote out of context and pretends Erasmus defended the monks and the pope!!! (Corner, pp. 8, 9). To do this Corner cites the last sentence in the following item. He must not know that Frederick and Erasmus worked together to defend Luther and attack the pope and monks. Durant states,

“Erasmus defended Luther, pointed out that there were crying abuses in the Church, and argued that efforts to remedy them should not be suppressed. When Frederick asked him what were Luther’s chief errors, he replied: “Two: he attacked the pope in his crown and the monks in their bellies”” (Durant, p. 358).

The last sentence is hyperbole, that is, exaggeration to emphasize a point. Anyone familiar with the writings of Erasmus knows when reading this that Erasmus did not consider these errors of Luther, simply the moves which got him into so much trouble with the pope and the monks. Read Durant (p. 358) or the original in Johannes Janssen’s *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages* (vol. III, St. Louis, MO, n.p., n.d., p. 173). (Both Durant and Janssen were Catholics; Durant even studied for the priesthood, so there is no benefit in their revealing that Erasmus felt antagonism against the papacy and the monks.)



BY FORGERS

If one reads so-called quotes from Erasmus which seem out of character, remember that he has not only been mis-translated and misquoted, his works have also been **forged**.

“**T**HE Louvainiers got hold of more of his letters, and published them with **alterations in the text**. He had written “Lutherus”; they changed it...[T]hey reprinted his “Colloquies,” imitated his style, and made him say the contradictory of what he had really said.”

“**H**E had denounced extorted confessions, he had laughed at pilgrimages and ridiculed indulgences. His new editors reproduced his real language, but **they attached paragraphs** in his name where he was represented as declaring that he had once thought all that, but had perceived his error.”

“**H**E had written that ‘the best confession was a confession to God’; his editor changed it into ‘the best confession is confession to a priest’” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, pp. 291, 292).



BECAUSE OF HIS CHARITY

Along with Erasmus' ability to "reprove, rebuke," he followed the scriptural command to do it "with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). He generally spoke "the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), as we are commanded. He was the consummate genteel politician. His Christian colors — charity, meekness, gentleness, and longsuffering — have been used by critics to paint him in a soft and unclear light. He dedicated books to many who sometimes opposed his views, such as Henry VIII and even Pope Leo. "Erasmus reduced one hazard by dedicating the work to Leo X" (Durant, p. 283). The popes, when asked why they did not try to have him killed, as they did other reformers, responded that "tolerance was only strategic" (Bainton, p. 211). Pope Paul III offered to make him a Cardinal to silence him "but he would have none of it" (Bainton, p. 255).

Erasmus tried to keep the lines of communication open between himself and people he had met during his early years in the Catholic church— with the hope of converting those he criticized. (Pope Adrian had been a schoolmate of his). Erasmus' thinking was like some today, who stay for a time in bad churches, trying to be salt and light to those whom they have come to love. He hoped to change the point of view of the Catholic leadership, and through that, to help the hundreds of thousands whom they held in sway. In explaining his cordiality to the popes he said,

"If he is curable, civility is in order. If he is not, modesty will damage his reputation more than invectives. How far do you think I would get...from a bad pope were I to start out like this, 'Impious Antichrist, extinguisher of the gospel, oppressor of liberty...'" (Bainton, p.177).

Erasmus believed that “grievous words stir up anger,” but “a soft tongue breaketh the bone” (Prov. 15:1, 25:15). “They are wretches and deserve to be torn in pieces; but we shall play into their hands by striking back at them” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 251). He said,

“Man of all creatures, born without claws, is contrived to live by benevolence. Nature confesses that she seeks to mollify men by conferring upon them alone the gift of tears, that they may grieve over each other’s woes...[W]hat serpent ever tried to poison another serpent?” (Bainton, p. 23).

“He was a harmless person...[H]e had never hurt anybody, and was surprised at the outcry against him,” writes Froude (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 235). Near the end ‘his spirit was being extinguished and his hopes belied,’ writes one biographer. He died having converted no popes or cardinals. Even to the end, Erasmus “did not temper in the least his attacks upon what he deemed to be abuses in the Church” (Bainton, pp. 211-213 et al.).



RASMUS MISREPRESENTED: 6

BY HIS WRITING **STYLE**

In the Renaissance, the dialogue was a popular literary device. One would write both a persuasive and a dissuasive, presenting both their *own* views and those of the *opposition*. This classical dialogue style greatly influenced Erasmus’ style of writing so that he often presented both points of view.

“As his habit was, he lays down **both** sides of the argument...” (*The New Schaff-Herzog*, p. 165).

For example, Erasmus was asked to write such a dialogue on the pope's right to wage war. The portion expressing Erasmus' *own* strong views *against* such activity have been conveniently lost, but the Catholic church used the *other* portion, assigning his name to it (Bainton, p. 89). Historians have "suppressed the correspondence because it contained virulent references to the warrior pope Julius II" (Bainton, p. 103).

Those who want to make him appear to be in agreement with Catholic viewpoints can simply quote chopped up bits of his writings from the portion in which he is presenting the view with which he disagrees.

He was "extremely fond" of "hyperbole" (Mangan, p. 64). His poem, written to St. Genevieve was "ironical," hyperbole, notes Pennington, in his more honest than most, *Life of Erasmus*. Yet some cite the poem as if Erasmus were serious (Mangan, p. 74, note 2).

SUMMARY: E R A S M U S

When taken as a whole, it is quite clear that Erasmus was a strong opponent of the activities and unscriptural beliefs of the Catholic church. He loved their people; he hated the error that would resign them to an eternity without Christ. Yale University Professor Roland H. Bainton states in his book, *Erasmus of Christendom*, that Erasmus was "rejected by the Catholics as subversive and by the Protestants as evasive" (Bainton, p. vii). Perhaps it was because he was neither; he was a Christian with views and a piety often seen in the Anabaptist tradition. "Erasmus had the highest respect for the Anabaptists. . . [who] insisted that they were simply Baptists..." (Bainton, pp. 260- 262).

It has not been the purpose of this chapter to ‘defend’ Erasmus or come to any judgments about him.

Erasmus and his small ink well, are not to be equated with the pure river of life, the word of God. It appears, however, that he was immensely more noble than we have been led to believe by the scoffers. Like most who have defended the word of God, against the critics and corrupt texts of their day, he has obviously been severely slandered. Of Jesus they said,

“Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?” Matt. 27:13

As the King James translators said in their “The Translators to the Reader,” “[E]nvy striketh most spitefully at the fairest, and at the chiefest.” Erasmus reminds all,

“I can keep my own innocency. I cannot help what men may say about me” (Froude, *The Life and Letters*, p. 32).

Erasmus died much estranged from the Catholic church. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* states, “in the midst of the group of Protestant scholars who had long been his truest friends, and, so far as is known, without relations of any sort with the Roman Catholic Church, he died” (NY: Funk and Wagnalls, 1909, vol. IV, p. 166). Hastings’ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, agrees saying,

“He died at Basel in 1536, committed to neither party, but amid an admiring circle of friends who were all on the Reformed side” (New York: Scribner’s, 1928, vol. VI, p. 83).

He was buried at a Protestant church in Basel. Cambridge historian, Owen Chadwick, closes the pages on this, “ex-monk,” saying, “[A] Protestant pastor preached his funeral sermon, and the money that he left was used to help Protestant refugees” (Chadwick, Owen, *A History of Christianity*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995, p. 198).

FINALLY:

ERASMUS REMINDS ALL,

“LET US
NOT FORGET
THAT SPEEDILY
WE SHALL ALL STAND
BEFORE THAT JUDGE
WHOSE JUDGMENT IS JUST”

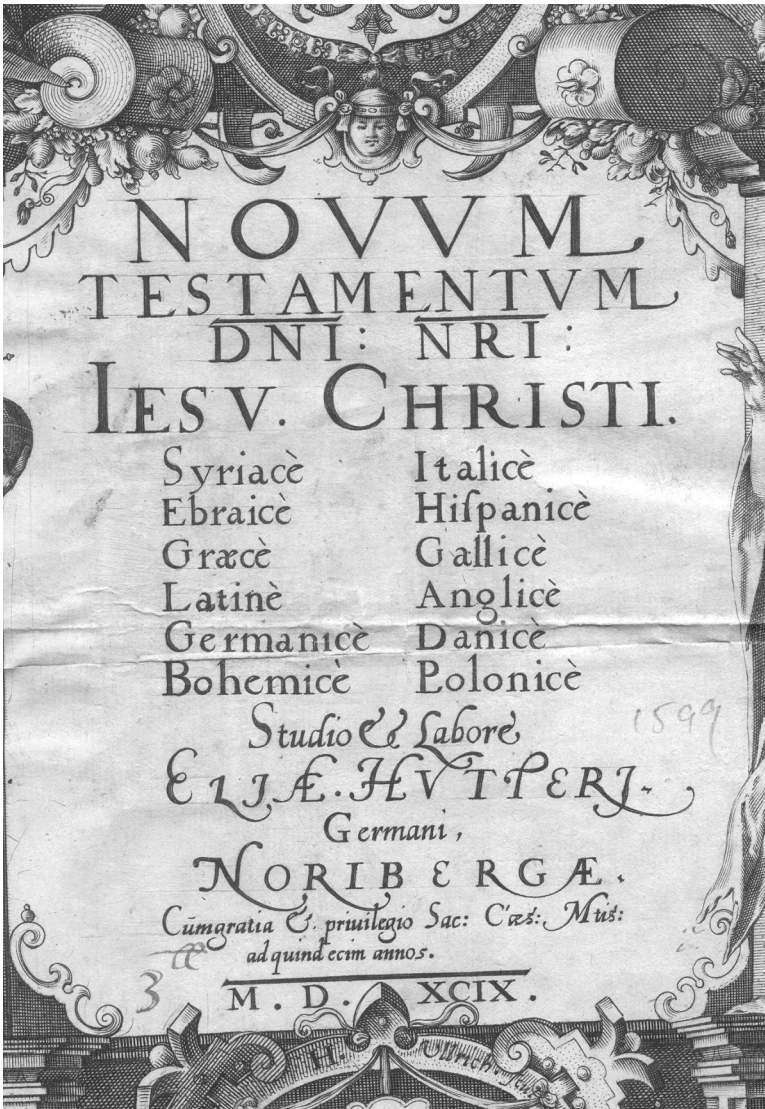
(Erasmii Epistolae, VII, 2061, pp. 513-14).

“**T**HE **W**ORD

THAT I HAVE SPOKEN,
THE SAME SHALL JUDGE HIM
IN THE LAST DAY.”

JOHN 12:48





Taken from the title page of
the Nuremberg Polyglot of A.D. 1599